HARRY PRESSFIELD

ESSAYS

FORMAL AND INFORMAL

COLLECTED AND EDITED BY
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AND
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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

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PREFACE TO THE REVISED EDITION

THE editors are glad to avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by a new edition to add to their compilation essays by such important thinkers and writers of our own day as John Dewey, Paul Elmer More, Havelock Ellis, Lytton Strachey, John Jay Chapman, G. K. Chesterton, and Roger Fry. The attitudes and ideas of these men on questions of morals, society, art, and letters are in the centre of the contemporary intellectual movement and ought to be of special value in stimulating discussion among students.

J. Z.

May 2, 1930.

PREFACE

COMPILATIONS of essays are numerous, and they all doubtless have their justification, as well as their motive. The editors of the present collection, if called upon to give an account of themselves, would sum up their aim under a variety of heads, as follows:

1. To bring together in one manageable volume both formal and informal essays.

2. To represent the great masters of the essay-writing art from the time of Lamb down to our own day, each one in some characteristic attitude, in order thereby to assure a high level of stylistic excellence.

3. To insure sufficient variety by restricting the selection to a single essay from each writer, except in the case of Lamb.

4. To gain a certain degree of freshness by making use of essays which have not grown too familiar from constant reproduction in anthologies. This could not be done in the case of all writers. The choice of matter that can interest undergraduates in Newman, Arnold, or Huxley is, after all, quite restricted.

5. To choose topics of relevance, not indeed to the merely timely and occasional interests of the undergraduate, but to his definite and permanent concern as a student of ideas, and personalities, and points of view, and, more particularly,

6. To relate the substance to the interest of the student in writers and the art of writing. This was the design of the essays on history, essay-writing, fiction, short-story, criticism, and book-reviewing. No apology is needed for the

preponderance of literary subjects in a book whose prime usefulness, it is hoped, will be to stimulate interest in the discussion of literary ideas.

The pertinence of each essay, either as an expression of the character of its writer or in its relation to the broader scheme of interests comprised in this compilation, is generally touched on in a note placed at the head of each essay.

In the preparation of the text the editors have thought it best to follow each writer's own system of spelling, capitals, and punctuation, occasionally taking the liberty of making him consistent with himself or correcting an apparent misprint.

For the privilege of reprinting copyrighted essays, the editors wish to express their acknowledgments to the courtesy of the following publishers: to Charles Scribner's Sons for "Walt Whitman" by Robert Louis Stevenson; to Charles Scribner's Sons and the author for "Hermes the Interpreter" from *Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies* by George Santayana; to Harcourt, Brace and Company and the authors for "Fiction" from *Appreciation of Literature,* by George Edward Woodberry; to Henry Holt and Company for "The Game" by Simeon Strunsky; and for "Humanism of George Meredith" from *Contemporary Literature* by Stuart Sherman; to Ernest Benn, Limited, for "Book Reviewing" by Robert Lynd; to George Allen and Unwin, Limited, for "The Soul and How to Deal with It" from *Essays and Addresses* by Gilbert Murray (published in the United States under the title of *Tradition and Progress* by Houghton Mifflin Company); to *The* (London) *Nation* and the author for "Of Comfort"; to E. P. Dutton and Company and the author for "On Speaking French" from *And Even Now* by Max Beerbohm; to W. Collins' Sons and the author for "A Critical Credo" by Middleton Murry; to

The Century Company for "The True Status of the American Short Story" from *Tradition and Jazz* by Fred Lewis Pattee; to George H. Doran Company and the author for "Notes on Civilization" from *Jesting Pilate* by Aldous Huxley.

F. W. S.
J. Z.

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ESSAYS
FORMAL AND INFORMAL

THE OLD AND THE NEW SCHOOLMASTER

CHARLES LAMB

The English essay had more than two hundred years of history back of it before Lamb began to write under the name of "Elia," but it was Lamb who breathed into the familiar essay that spirit and atmosphere which is to-day felt as its primary distinction. One can find in him a suggestion, subtly veiled, of the didactic quality which prevailed in the Baconian essay of the seventeenth century, and he carried over from the periodical essay of the eighteenth its interest in human types, but he saw his types with the concrete individualness of the dramatist and allowed the moral to be felt through the sympathetic insight of his presentation. Lamb contributed to the familiar essay a refined lyricism and enriched the plainer style of his predecessors with the fanciful diction and poetic cadences of such outmoded favorites of his as Thomas Fuller and Sir Thomas Browne. But his oddities of manner and archaic tone are only incidental charms. What makes him the most beloved of essayists is that everything which he writes is suffused with the sense of his own rich nature, reflecting the delicate shades of life now with tender melancholy, now with elflike humor, always with the indulgent wisdom of one who has felt life deeply and with the flawless taste and workmanship of a great artist in words. (*The Old and the New Schoolmaster* appeared in the *London Magazine*, May, 1821, and was reprinted in *Essays of Elia*, 1823. *Captain Jackson* appeared in the *London Magazine*, November, 1824, and was reprinted in *Last Essays of Elia*, 1833.)

THE OLD AND THE NEW SCHOOLMASTER

MY reading has been lamentably desultory and immethodical. Odd, out of the way, old English plays, and treatises, have supplied me with most of my notions, and ways of feeling. In everything that relates to *science*, I am a whole Encyclopædia behind the rest of the world. I should have scarcely cut a figure among the franklins, or country gentlemen, in king John's days. I know less geography than a school-boy of six weeks' standing. To me a map of old Ortelius is as authentic as Arrowsmith. I do not know whereabout Africa merges into Asia; whether Ethiopia lie in one or other of those great divisions; nor can form the remotest conjecture of the position of New South Wales, or Van Diemen's Land. Yet do I hold a correspondence with a very dear friend in the first-named of these two Terræ Incognitæ. I have no astronomy. I do not know where to look for the Bear, or Charles's Wain; the place of any star; or the name of any of them at sight. I guess at Venus only by her brightness — and if the sun on some portentous morn were to make his first appearance in the West, I verily believe, that, while all the world were gasping in apprehension about me, I alone should stand unterrified, from sheer incuriosity and want of observation. Of history and chronology I possess some vague points, such as one cannot help picking up in the course of miscellaneous study; but I never deliberately sat down to a chronicle, even of my own country. I have most dim apprehensions of the four great monarchies; and sometimes the Assyrian, sometimes the Persian, floats

as *first* in my fancy. I make the widest conjectures concerning Egypt, and her shepherd kings. My friend *M.*, with great painstaking, got me to think I understood the first proposition in Euclid, but gave me over in despair at the second. I am entirely unacquainted with the modern languages; and, like a better man than myself, have "small Latin and less Greek." I am a stranger to the shapes and texture of the commonest trees, herbs, flowers — not from the circumstance of my being town-born — for I should have brought the same inobservant spirit into the world with me, had I first seen it "on Devon's leafy shores," — and am no less at a loss among purely town-objects, tools, engines, mechanic processes. — Not that I affect ignorance — but my head has not many mansions, nor spacious; and I have been obliged to fill it with such cabinet curiosities as it can hold without aching. I sometimes wonder how I have passed my probation with so little discredit in the world, as I have done, upon so meagre a stock. But the fact is, a man may do very well with a very little knowledge, and scarce be found out, in mixed company; everybody is so much more ready to produce his own, than to call for a display of your acquisitions. But in a *tête-à-tête* there is no shuffling. Truth will out. There is nothing which I dread so much, as the being left alone for a quarter of an hour with a sensible, well-informed man, that does not know me. I lately got into a dilemma of this sort. —

In one of my daily jaunts between Bishopsgate and Shacklewell, the coach stopped to take up a staid-looking gentleman, about the wrong side of thirty, who was giving his parting directions (while the steps were adjusting), in a tone of mild authority, to a tall youth, who seemed to be neither his clerk, his son, nor his servant, but something partaking of all three. The youth was dismissed, and we drove on. As we were the sole passengers, he naturally

enough addressed his conversation to me; and we discussed the merits of the fare, the civility and punctuality of the driver; the circumstance of an opposition coach having been lately set up, with the probabilities of its success — to all which I was enabled to return pretty satisfactory answers, having been drilled into this kind of etiquette by some years' daily practice of riding to and fro in the stage aforesaid — when he suddenly alarmed me by a startling question, whether I had seen the show of prize cattle that morning in Smithfield? Now as I had not seen it, and do not greatly care for such sort of exhibitions, I was obliged to return a cold negative. He seemed a little mortified, as well as astonished, at my declaration, as (it appeared) he was just come fresh from the sight, and doubtless had hoped to compare notes on the subject. However he assured me that I had lost a fine treat, as it far exceeded the show of last year. We were now approaching Norton Falgate, when the sight of some shop-goods *ticketed* freshened him up into a dissertation upon the cheapness of cottons this spring. I was now a little in heart, as the nature of my morning avocations had brought me into some sort of familiarity with the raw material; and I was surprised to find how eloquent I was becoming on the state of the India market — when, presently, he dashed my incipient vanity to the earth at once, by inquiring whether I had ever made any calculation as to the value of the rental of all the retail shops in London. Had he asked of me, what song the Sirens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, I might, with Sir Thomas Browne, have hazarded a "wide solution."* My companion saw my embarrassment, and, the almshouses beyond Shoreditch just coming in view, with great good-nature and dexterity shifted his conversation to the subject of public charities; which led to the comparative

* Urn Burial.

merits of provision for the poor in past and present times, with observations on the old monastic institutions, and charitable orders; — but, finding me rather dimly impressed with some glimmering notions from old poetic associations, than strongly fortified with any speculations reducible to calculation on the subject, he gave the matter up; and, the country beginning to open more and more upon us, as we approached the turnpike at Kingsland (the destined termination of his journey), he put a home thrust upon me, in the most unfortunate position he could have chosen, by advancing some queries relative to the North Pole Expedition. While I was muttering out something about the Panorama of those strange regions (which I had actually seen), by way of parrying the question, the coach stopping relieved me from any further apprehensions. My companion getting out, left me in the comfortable possession of my ignorance; and I heard him, as he went off, putting questions to an outside passenger, who had alighted with him, regarding an epidemic disorder, that had been rife about Dalston; and which, my friend assured him, had gone through five or six schools in that neighbourhood. The truth now flashed upon me, that my companion was a schoolmaster; and that the youth, whom he had parted from at our first acquaintance, must have been one of the bigger boys, or the usher. — He was evidently a kind-hearted man, who did not seem so much desirous of provoking discussion by the questions which he put, as of obtaining information at any rate. It did not appear that he took any interest, either, in such kind of inquiries, for their own sake; but that he was in some way bound to seek for knowledge. A greenish-coloured coat, which he had on, forbade me to surmise that he was a clergyman. The adventure gave birth to some reflections on the difference between persons of his profession in past and present times.

Rest to the souls of those fine old Pedagogues; the breed, long since extinct, of the Lilys, and the Linacres: who believing that all learning was contained in the languages which they taught, and despising every other acquirement as superficial and useless, came to their task as to a sport! Passing from infancy to age, they dreamed away all their days as in a grammar-school. Revolving in a perpetual cycle of declensions, conjugations, syntaxes, and prosodies; renewing constantly the occupations which had charmed their studious childhood; rehearsing continually the part of the past; life must have slipped from them at last like one day. They were always in their first garden, reaping harvests of their golden time, among their *Flori* and their *Spici-legia;* in Arcadia still, but kings; the ferule of their sway not much harsher, but of like dignity with that mild sceptre attributed to king Basileus; the Greek and Latin, their stately Pamela and their Philoclea; with the occasional duncery of some untoward Tyro, serving for a refreshing interlude of a Mopsa, or a clown Damætas!

With what a savour doth the Preface to Colet's, or (as it is sometimes called) Paul's Accidence, set forth! "To exhort every man to the learning of grammar, that intendeth to attain the understanding of the tongues, wherein is contained a great treasury of wisdom and knowledge, it would seem but vain and lost labour; for so much as it is known, that nothing can surely be ended, whose beginning is either feeble or faulty; and no building be perfect, whereas the foundation and ground-work is ready to fall, and unable to uphold the burden of the frame." How well doth this stately preamble (comparable to those which Milton commendeth as "having been the usage to prefix to some solemn law, then first promulgated by Solon, or Lycurgus") correspond with and illustrate that pious zeal for conformity, expressed in a succeeding clause, which would fence about

grammar-rules with the severity of faith-articles! — "as for the diversity of grammars, it is well profitably taken away by the king majesties wisdom, who foreseeing the inconvenience, and favourably providing the remedie, caused one kind of grammar by sundry learned men to be diligently drawn, and so to be set out, only everywhere to be taught for the use of learners, and for the hurt in changing of school-maisters." What a *gusto* in that which follows: "wherein it is profitable that he [the pupil] can orderly decline his noun, and his verb." *His* noun!

The fine dream is fading away fast; and the least concern of a teacher in the present day is to inculcate grammar-rules.

The modern schoolmaster is expected to know a little of everything, because his pupil is required not to be entirely ignorant of anything. He must be superficially, if I may so say, omniscient. He is to know something of pneumatics; of chemistry; of whatever is curious, or proper to excite the attention of the youthful mind; an insight into mechanics is desirable, with a touch of statistics; the quality of soils, &c. botany, the constitution of his country, *cum multis aliis*.* You may get a notion of some part of his expected duties by consulting the famous Tractate on Education addressed to Mr. Hartlib.

All these things — these, or the desire of them — he is expected to instil, not by set lessons from professors, which he may charge in the bill, but at school-intervals, as he walks the streets, or saunters through green fields (those natural instructors), with his pupils. The least part of what is expected from him is to be done in school-hours. He must insinuate knowledge at the *mollia tempora fandi*.† He must seize every occasion — the season of the year — the time of the day — a passing cloud — a rainbow — a waggon of hay — a regiment of soldiers going by — to inculcate

* [along with many other things.] † [the happiest season for speech.]

something useful. He can receive no pleasure from a casual glimpse of Nature, but must catch at it as an object of instruction. He must interpret beauty into the picturesque. He cannot relish a beggar-man, or a gipsy, for thinking of the suitable improvement. Nothing comes to him, not spoiled by the sophisticating medium of moral uses. The Universe — that Great Book, as it has been called — is to him indeed, to all intents and purposes, a book, out of which he is doomed to read tedious homilies to distasting schoolboys. — Vacations themselves are none to him, he is only rather worse off than before; for commonly he has some intrusive upper-boy fastened upon him at such times; some cadet of a great family; some neglected lump of nobility, or gentry; that he must drag after him to the play, to the Panorama, to Mr. Bartley's Orrery, to the Panopticon, or into the country, to a friend's house, or his favourite watering-place. Wherever he goes, this uneasy shadow attends him. A boy is at his board, and in his path, and in all his movements. He is boy-rid, sick of perpetual boy.

Boys are capital fellows in their own way, among their mates; but they are unwholesome companions for grown people. The restraint is felt no less on the one side, than on the other. — Even a child, that "plaything for an hour," tires *always*. The noises of children, playing their own fancies — as I now hearken to them by fits, sporting on the green before my window, while I am engaged in these grave speculations at my neat suburban retreat at Shacklewell — by distance made more sweet — inexpressibly take from the labour of my task. It is like writing to music. They seem to modulate my periods. They ought at least to do so — for in the voice of that tender age there is a kind of poetry, far unlike the harsh prose-accents of man's conversation. — I should but spoil their sport, and diminish my own sympathy for them, by mingling in their pastime.

I would not be domesticated all my days with a person of very superior capacity to my own — not, if I know myself at all, from any considerations of jealousy or self-comparison, for the occasional communion with such minds has constituted the fortune and felicity of my life — but the habit of too constant intercourse with spirits above you, instead of raising you, keeps you down. Too frequent doses of original thinking from others, restrain what lesser portion of that faculty you may possess of your own. You get entangled in another man's mind, even as you lose yourself in another man's grounds. You are walking with a tall varlet, whose strides out-pace yours to lassitude. The constant operation of such potent agency would reduce me, I am convinced, to imbecility. You may derive thoughts from others; your way of thinking, the mould in which your thoughts are cast, must be your own. Intellect may be imparted, but not each man's intellectual frame. —

As little as I should wish to be always thus dragged upwards, as little (or rather still less) is it desirable to be stunted downwards by your associates. The trumpet does not more stun you by its loudness, than a whisper teases you by its provoking inaudibility.

Why are we never quite at our ease in the presence of a schoolmaster? — because we are conscious that he is not quite at his ease in ours. He is awkward, and out of place, in the society of his equals. He comes like Gulliver from among his little people, and he cannot fit the stature of his understanding to yours. He cannot meet you on the square. He wants a point given him, like an indifferent whist-player. He is so used to teaching, that he wants to be teaching *you*. One of these professors, upon my complaining that these little sketches of mine were anything but methodical, and that I was unable to make them otherwise, kindly offered to instruct me in the method by which young gentlemen in

his seminary were taught to compose English themes. — The jests of a schoolmaster are coarse, or thin. They do not *tell* out of school. He is under the restraint of a formal and didactive hypocrisy in company, as a clergyman is under a moral one. He can no more let his intellect loose in society, than the other can his inclinations. — He is forlorn among his co-evals; his juniors cannot be his friends.

"I take blame to myself," said a sensible man of this profession, writing to a friend respecting a youth who had quitted his school abruptly, "that your nephew was not more attached to me. But persons in my situation are more to be pitied, than can well be imagined. We are surrounded by young, and, consequently, ardently affectionate hearts, but *we* can never hope to share an atom of their affections. The relation of master and scholar forbids this. *How pleasing this must be to you, how I envy your feelings,* my friends will sometimes say to me, when they see young men, whom I have educated, return after some years absence from school, their eyes shining with pleasure, while they shake hands with their old master, bringing a present of game to me, or a toy to my wife, and thanking me in the warmest terms for my care of their education. A holiday is begged for the boys; the house is a scene of happiness; I, only, am sad at heart. — This fine-spirited and warm-hearted youth, who fancies he repays his master with gratitude for the care of his boyish years — this young man — in the eight long years I watched over him with a parent's anxiety, never could repay me with one look of genuine feeling. He was proud, when I praised; he was submissive, when I reproved him; but he did never *love* me — and what he now mistakes for gratitude and kindness for me, is but the pleasant sensation, which all persons feel at revisiting the scenes of their boyish hopes and fears; and the seeing on equal terms the man they were accustomed to look up to with reverence. My wife

too," this interesting correspondent goes on to say, " my once darling Anna, is the wife of a schoolmaster. — When I married her — knowing that the wife of a schoolmaster ought to be a busy notable creature, and fearing that my gentle Anna would ill supply the loss of my dear bustling mother, just then dead, who never sat still, was in every part of the house in a moment, and whom I was obliged sometimes to threaten to fasten down in a chair, to save her from fatiguing herself to death — I expressed my fears, that I was bringing her into a way of life unsuitable to her; and she, who loved me tenderly, promised for my sake to exert herself to perform the duties of her new situation. She promised, and she has kept her word. What wonders will not woman's love perform? — My house is managed with a propriety and decorum, unknown in other schools; my boys are well fed, look healthy, and have every proper accommodation; and all this performed with a careful economy, that never descends to meanness. But I have lost my gentle, *helpless* Anna! —— When we sit down to enjoy an hour of repose after the fatigue of the day, I am compelled to listen to what have been her useful (and they are really useful) employments through the day, and what she proposes for her to-morrow's task. Her heart and her features are changed by the duties of her situation. To the boys, she never appears other than the *master's wife,* and she looks up to me as the *boys' master;* to whom all show of love and affection would be highly improper, and unbecoming the dignity of her situation and mine. Yet *this* my gratitude forbids me to hint to her. For my sake she submitted to be this altered creature, and can I reproach her for it? " — For the communication of this letter, I am indebted to my cousin Bridget.

CAPTAIN JACKSON

AMONG the deaths in our obituary for this month, I observe with concern "At his cottage on the Bath road, Captain Jackson." The name and attribution are common enough; but a feeling like reproach persuades me, that this could have been no other in fact than my dear old friend, who some five-and-twenty years ago rented a tenement, which he was pleased to dignify with the appellation here used, about a mile from Westbourn Green. Alack, how good men, and the good turns they do us, slide out of memory, and are recalled but by the surprise of some such sad memento as that which now lies before us!

He whom I mean was a retired half-pay officer, with a wife and two grown-up daughters, whom he maintained with the port and notions of gentlewomen upon that slender professional allowance. Comely girls they were too.

And was I in danger of forgetting this man? — his cheerful suppers — the noble tone of hospitality, when first you set your foot in *the cottage* — the anxious ministerings about you, where little or nothing (God knows) was to be ministered. — Althea's horn in a poor platter — the power of self-enchantment, by which, in his magnificent wishes to entertain you, he multiplied his means to bounties.

You saw with your bodily eyes indeed what seemed a bare scrag — cold savings from the foregone meal — remnant hardly sufficient to sent a mendicant from the door contented. But in the copious will — the revelling imagination of your

host — the " mind, the mind, Master Shallow," whole beeves were spread before you — hecatombs — no end appeared to the profusion.

It was the widow's cruse — the loaves and fishes; carving could not lessen nor helping diminish it — the stamina were left — the elemental bone still flourished, divested of its accidents.

" Let us live while we can," methinks I hear the open-handed creature exclaim; " while we have, let us not want," " here is plenty left; " " want for nothing " — with many more such hospitable sayings, the spurs of appetite, and old concomitants of smoking boards, and feast-oppressed chargers. Then sliding a slender ratio of Single Gloucester upon his wife's plate, or the daughter's, he would convey the remanent rind into his own, with a merry quirk of " the nearer the bone," &c., and declaring that he universally preferred the outside. For we had our table distinctions, you are to know, and some of us in a manner sate above the salt. None but his guest or guests dreamed of tasting flesh luxuries at night, the fragments were *verè hospitibus sacra*.* But of one thing or another there was always enough, and leavings: only he would sometimes finish the remainder crust, to show that he wished no savings.

Wine we had none; nor, except on very rare occasions, spirits; but the sensation of wine was there. Some thin kind of ale I remember — " British beverage," he would say! " Push about, my boys; " " Drink to your sweethearts, girls." At every meagre draught a toast must ensue, or a song. All the forms of good liquor were there, with none of the effects wanting. Shut your eyes, and you would swear a capacious bowl of punch was foaming in the centre, with beams of generous Port or Madeira radiating to it from each of the table corners. You got flustered, without knowing

* [truly sacred to guests.]

whence; tipsy upon words; and reeled under the potency of his unperforming Bacchanalian encouragements.

We had our songs — "Why, Soldiers, Why" — and the "British Grenadiers" — in which last we were all obliged to bear chorus. Both the daughters sang. Their proficiency was a nightly theme — the masters he had given them — the "no-expence" which he spared to accomplish them in a science "so necessary to young women." But then — they could not sing "without the instrument."

Sacred, and, by me, never-to-be-violated, Secrets of Poverty! Should I disclose your honest aims at grandeur, your makeshift efforts of magnificence? Sleep, sleep, with all thy broken keys, if one of the bunch be extant; thrummed by a thousand ancestral thumbs; dear, cracked spinnet of dearer Louisa! Without mention of mine, be dumb, thou thin accompanier of her thinner warble! A veil be spread over the dear delighted face of the well-deluded father, who now haply listening to cherubic notes, scarce feels sincerer pleasure than when she awakened thy time-shaken chords responsive to the twitterings of that slender image of a voice.

We were not without our literary talk either. It did not extend far, but as far as it went, it was good. It was bottomed well; had good grounds to go upon. In *the cottage* was a room, which tradition authenticated to have been the same in which Glover, in his occasional retirements, had penned the greater part of his Leonidas. This circumstance was nightly quoted, though none of the present inmates, that I could discover, appeared ever to have met with the poem in question. But that was no matter. Glover had written there, and the anecdote was pressed into the account of the family importance. It diffused a learned air through the apartment, the little side casement of which (the poet's study window), opening upon a superb view as far as the pretty spire of Harrow, over domains and patrimonial acres,

not a rood nor square yard whereof our host could call his own, yet gave occasion to an immoderate expansion of — vanity shall I call it? — in his bosom, as he showed them in a glowing summer evening. It was all his, he took it all in, and communicated rich portions of it to his guests. It was a part of his largess, his hospitality; it was going over his grounds; he was lord for the time of showing them, and you the implicit lookers-up to his magnificence.

He was a juggler, who threw mists before your eyes — you had no time to detect his fallacies. He would say, "Hand me the *silver* sugar-tongs;" and, before you could discover it was a single spoon, and that *plated,* he would disturb and captivate your imagination by a misnomer of "the urn" for a tea-kettle; or by calling a homely bench a sofa. Rich men direct you to their furniture, poor ones divert you from it; he neither did one nor the other, but by simply assuming that everything was handsome about him, you were positively at a demur what you did, or did not see, at *the cottage.* With nothing to live on, he seemed to live on everything. He had a stock of wealth in his mind; not that which is properly termed *Content,* for in truth he was not to be *contained* at all, but overflowed all bounds by the force of a magnificent self-delusion.

Enthusiasm is catching; and even his wife, a sober native of North Britain, who generally saw things more as they were, was not proof against the continual collision of his credulity. Her daughters were rational and discreet young women; in the main, perhaps, not insensible to their true circumstances. I have seen them assume a thoughtful air at times. But such was the preponderating opulence of his fancy, that I am persuaded, not for any half hour together did they ever look their own prospects fairly in the face. There was no resisting the vortex of his temperament. His riotous imagination conjured up handsome settlements be-

fore their eyes, which kept them up in the eye of the world too, and seem at last to have realized themselves; for they both have married since, I am told, more than respectably.

It is long since, and my memory waxes dim on some subjects, or I should wish to convey some notion of the manner in which the pleasant creature described the circumstances of his own wedding-day. I faintly remember something of a chaise and four, in which he made his entry into Glasgow on that morning to fetch the bride home, or carry her thither, I forget which. It so completely made out the stanza of the old ballad —

> When we came down through Glasgow town,
> We were a comely sight to see;
> My love was clad in black velvet,
> And I myself in cramasie.

I suppose it was the only occasion upon which his own actual splendour at all corresponded with the world's notions on that subject. In homely cart, or travelling caravan, by whatever humble vehicle they chanced to be transported in less prosperous days, the ride through Glasgow came back upon his fancy, not as a humiliating contrast, but as a fair occasion for reverting to that one day's state. It seemed an "equipage etern" from which no power of fate or fortune, once mounted, had power thereafter to dislodge him.

There is some merit in putting a handsome face upon indigent circumstances. To bully and swagger away the sense of them before strangers, may not be always discommendable. Tibbs, and Bobadil, even when detected, have more of our admiration than contempt. But for a man to put the cheat upon himself; to play the Bobadil at home; and, steeped in poverty up to the lips, to fancy himself all the while chin-deep in riches, is a strain of constitutional philososphy, and a mastery over fortune, which was reserved for my old friend Captain Jackson.

ON PERSONAL IDENTITY

WILLIAM HAZLITT

Aside from Lamb Hazlitt is doubtless the most interesting of the English familiar essayists of the nineteenth century. His qualities are of an altogether different order from Lamb's but are in their own kind of the first excellence. He has neither the humaneness nor the artistry of his contemporary, but his passionate intelligence and spirited eloquence make him the most stimulating and readable man of his generation. He comprehends a wide range of interests, writing with judgment and confidence on politics, economics, literature, painting, the theatre, philosophy and history. On all topics his mind is critical and penetrating and teems with novel thoughts and suggestions. His style of expression is vehement, picturesque and paradoxical. He loves the thrill of contradicting an accepted opinion, and he indulges this propensity without doing violence to his intellectual integrity. The essay *On Personal Identity* is a highly characteristic revelation of the mingling in Hazlitt of egotism with the power of critical aloofness. (It appeared in the *Monthly Magazine*, January, 1828, and was reprinted in *Winterslow*, 1850, and in *Collected Works*, 1902, Vol. XII.)

ON PERSONAL IDENTITY

"Ha! here be three of us sophisticated." — *Lear.*

IF I were not Alexander, I would be Diogenes!" said the Macedonian hero; and the cynic might have retorted the compliment upon the prince by saying, that, "were he not Diogenes, he would be Alexander!" This is the universal exception, the invariable reservation that our self-love makes, the utmost point at which our admiration or envy ever arrives — to wish, if we were not ourselves, to be some other individual. No one ever wishes to be another, *instead* of himself. We may feel a desire to change places with others — to have one man's fortune — another's health or strength — his wit or learning, or accomplishments of various kinds —

> "Wishing to be like one more rich in hope,
> Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
> Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope:"

but we would still be our selves, to possess and enjoy all these, or we would not give a doit for them. But, on this supposition, what in truth should we be the better for them? It is not we, but another, that would reap the benefit; and what do we care about that other? In that case, the present owner might as well continue to enjoy them. *We* should not be gainers by the change. If the meanest beggar who crouches at a palace-gate, and looks up with awe and suppliant fear to the proud inmate as he passes, could be put in possession of all the finery, the pomp, the luxury, and wealth that he sees and envies on the sole condition of get-

ting rid, together with his rags and misery, of all recollection that there ever was such a wretch as himself, he would reject the proffered boon with scorn. He might be glad to change situations; but he would insist on keeping his own thoughts, to *compare notes,* and point the transition by the force of contrast. He would not, on any account, forego his self-congratulation on the unexpected accession of good fortune, and his escape from past suffering. All that excites his cupidity, his envy, his repining or despair, is the alternative of some great good to himself; and if, in order to attain that object, he is to part with his own existence to take that of another, he can feel no farther interest in it. This is the language both of passion and reason.

Here lies " the rub that makes calamity of so long life: " for it is not barely the apprehension of the ills that " in that sleep of death may come," but also our ignorance and indifference to the promised good, that produces our repugnance and backwardness to quit the present scene. No man, if he had his choice, would be the angel Gabriel to-morrow! What is the angel Gabriel to him but a splendid vision? He might as well have an ambition to be turned into a bright cloud, or a particular star. The interpretation of which is, he can have no sympathy with the angel Gabriel. Before he can be transformed into so bright and ethereal an essence, he must necessarily " put off this mortal coil " — be divested of all his old habits, passions, thoughts, and feelings — to be endowed with other lofty and beatific attributes, of which he has no notion; and, therefore, he would rather remain a little longer in this mansion of clay, which, with all its flaws, inconveniences, and perplexities, contains all that he has any real knowledge of, or any affection for. When, indeed, he is about to quit it in spite of himself, and has no other chance left to escape the darkness of the tomb, he may then have no objection (making a virtue of necessity) to put on

angels' wings, to have radiant locks, to wear a wreath of amaranth, and thus to masquerade it in the skies.

It is an instance of the truth and beauty of the ancient mythology, that the various transmutations it recounts are never voluntary, or of favourable omen, but are interposed as a timely release to those who, driven on by fate, and urged to the last extremity of fear or anguish, are turned into a flower, a plant, an animal, a star, a precious stone, or into some object that may inspire pity or mitigate our regret for their misfortunes. Narcissus was transformed into a flower; Daphne into a laurel; Arethusa into a fountain (by the favour of the gods) — but not till no other remedy was left for their despair. It is a sort of smiling cheat upon death, and graceful compromise with annihilation. It is better to exist by proxy, in some softened type and soothing allegory, than not at all — to breathe in a flower or shine in a constellation, than to be utterly forgot; but no one would change his natural condition (if he could help it) for that of a bird, an insect, a beast, or a fish, however delightful their mode of existence, or however enviable he might deem their lot compared to his own. Their thoughts are not our thoughts — their happiness is not our happiness; nor can we enter into it except with a passing smile of approbation, or as a refinement of fancy. As the poet sings: —

> "What more felicity can fall to creature
> Than to enjoy delight with liberty,
> And to be lord of all the works of nature?
> To reign in the air from earth to highest sky;
> To feed on flowers and weeds of glorious feature;
> To taste whatever thing doth please the eye? —
> Who rests not pleased with such happiness,
> Well worthy he to taste of wretchedness!"

This is gorgeous description and fine declamation: yet who would be found to act upon it, even in the forming of a wish;

or would not rather be the thrall of wretchedness, than launch out (by the aid of some magic spell) into all the delights of such a butterfly state of existence? The French (if any people can) may be said to enjoy this airy, heedless gaiety and unalloyed exuberance of satisfaction: yet what Englishman would deliberately change with them? We would sooner be miserable after our own fashion than happy after theirs. It is not happiness, then, in the abstract, which we seek, that can be addressed as

> "That something still that prompts th' eternal sigh,
> For which we wish to live or dare to die, — "

but a happiness suited to our taste and faculties — that has become a part of ourselves, by habit and enjoyment — that is endeared to us by a thousand recollections, privations, and sufferings. No one, then, would willingly change his country or his kind for the most plausible pretences held out to him. The most humiliating punishment inflicted in ancient fable is the change of sex: not that it was any degradation in itself — but that it must occasion a total derangement of the moral economy and confusion of the sense of personal propriety. The thing is said to have happened, *au sens contraire*,* in our time. The story is to be met with in "very choice Italian"; and Lord D—— tells it in very plain English!

We may often find ourselves envying the possessions of others, and sometimes inadvertently indulging a wish to change places with them altogether; but our self-love soon discovers some excuse to be off the bargain we were ready to strike, and retracts "vows made in haste, as violent and void." We might make up our minds to the alteration in every other particular; but, when it comes to the point, there is sure to be some trait or feature of character in the object

* [in the reverse sense.]

of our admiration to which we cannot reconcile ourselves — some favourite quality or darling foible of our own, with which we can by no means resolve to part. The more enviable the situation of another, the more entirely to our taste, the more reluctant we are to leave any part of ourselves behind that would be so fully capable of appreciating all the exquisiteness of its new situation, or not to enter into the possession of such an imaginary reversion of good fortune with all our previous inclinations and sentiments. The outward circumstances were fine: they only wanted a *soul* to enjoy them, and that soul is ours (as the costly ring wants the peerless jewel to perfect and set it off). The humble prayer and petition to sneak into visionary felicity by personal adoption, or the surrender of our own personal pretensions, always ends in a daring project of usurpation, and a determination to expel the actual proprietor, and supply his place so much more worthily with our own identity — not bating a single jot of it. Thus, in passing through a fine collection of pictures, who has not envied the privilege of visiting it every day, and wished to be the owner? But the rising sigh is soon checked, and "the native hue of emulation is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," when we come to ask ourselves not merely whether the owner has any taste at all for these splendid works, and does not look upon them as so much expensive furniture, like his chairs and tables — but whether he has the same precise (and only true) taste that we have — whether he has the very same favourites that we have — whether he may not be so blind as to prefer a Vandyke to a Titian, a Ruysdael to a Claude; — nay, whether he may not have other pursuits and avocations that draw off his attention from the sole objects of our idolatry, and which seem to us mere impertinences and waste of time? In that case, we at once lose all patience, and exclaim indignantly, "Give us back our taste and keep your

pictures! " It is not we who should envy them the possession of the treasure, but they who should envy us the true and exclusive enjoyment of it. A similar train of feeling seems to have dictated Warton's spirited Sonnet on visiting Wilton-House: —

> " From Pembroke's princely dome, where mimic art
> Decks with a magic hand the dazzling bowers,
> Its living hues where the warm pencil pours,
> And breathing forms from the rude marble start,
> How to life's humbler scene can I depart?
> My breast all glowing from those gorgeous towers,
> In my low cell how cheat the sullen hours?
> Vain the complaint! For Fancy can impart
> (To fate superior and to fortune's power)
> Whate'er adorns the stately storied-hall:
> She, mid the dungeon's solitary gloom,
> Can dress the Graces in their attic pall;
> Bid the green landskip's vernal beauty bloom;
> And in bright trophies clothe the twilight wall."

One sometimes passes by a gentleman's park, an old family-seat, with its moss-grown ruinous paling, its " glades mild-opening to the genial day," or embrowned with forest-trees. Here one would be glad to spend one's life, " shut up in measureless content," and to grow old beneath ancestral oaks, instead of gaining a precarious, irksome, and despised livelihood, by indulging romantic sentiments, and writing disjointed descriptions of them. The thought has scarcely risen to the lips, when we learn that the owner of so blissful a seclusion is a thorough-bred fox-hunter, a preserver of the game, a brawling electioneerer, a Tory member of parliament, a " no-Popery " man! — " I'd sooner be a dog, and bay the moon! " Who would be Sir Thomas Lethbridge for his title and estate? asks one man. But would not almost any one wish to

be Sir Francis Burdett, the man of the people, the idol of the electors of Westminster? says another. I can only answer for myself. Respectable and honest as he is, there is something in his white boots, and white breeches, and white coat, and white hair, and red face, and white hat, that I cannot, by any effort of candor, confound my personal identity with! If Mr. Hobhouse can prevail on Sir Francis to exchange, let him do so by all means. Perhaps they might contrive to *club* a soul between them! Could I have had my will, I should have been born a lord: but one would not be a booby lord neither. I am haunted by an odd fancy of driving down the Great North Road in a chaise and four, about fifty years ago, and coming to the inn at Ferry-bridge, with out-riders, white favours, and a coronet on the panels; and then I choose my companion in the coach. Really there is a witchcraft in all this that makes it necessary to turn away from it, lest, in the conflict between imagination and impossibility, I should grow feverish and light-headed! But, on the other hand, if one was born a lord, should one have the same idea (that every one else has) of *a peeress in her own right?* Is not distance, giddy elevation, mysterious awe, an impassable gulf, necessary to form this idea in the mind, that fine ligament of "ethereal braid, sky-woven," that lets down heaven upon earth, fair as enchantment, soft as Berenice's hair, bright and garlanded like Ariadne's crown; and is it not better to have had this idea all through life — to have caught but glimpses of it, to have known it but in a dream — than to have been born a lord ten times over, with twenty pampered menials at one's back, and twenty descents to boast of? It is the envy of certain privileges, the sharp privations we have undergone, the cutting neglect we have met with from the want of birth or title, that gives its zest to the distinction: the thing itself may be indifferent or contemptible enough. It is the *becoming* a lord that is to be

desired; but he who becomes a lord in reality is an upstart — a mere pretender, without the sterling essence; so that all that is of any worth in this supposed transition is purely imaginary and impossible. Had I been a lord, I should have married Miss ——, and my life would not have been one long-drawn sigh, made up of sweet and bitter regret! * Had I been a lord, I would have been a Popish lord, and then I might also have been an honest man: — poor, and then I might have been proud and not vulgar! Kings are so accustomed to look down on all the rest of the world, that they consider the condition of mortality as vile and intolerable, if stripped of royal state, and cry out in the bitterness of their despair, "Give me a crown, or a tomb!" It should seem from this as if all mankind would change with the first crowned head that could propose the alternative, or that it would be only the presumption of the supposition, or a sense of their own unworthiness, that would deter them. Perhaps there is not a single throne that, if it was to be filled by this sort of voluntary metempsychosis, would not remain empty. Many would, no doubt, be glad to "monarchise, be feared, and kill with looks" in their own persons and after their own fashion: but who would be the *double* of ——, or of those shadows of a shade — those "tenth transmitters of a foolish face" — Charles X. and Ferdinand VII.? If monarchs have little sympathy with mankind, mankind have even less with monarchs. They are merely to us a sort of state-puppets or royal wax-work, which we may gaze at with superstitious wonder, but have no wish to become; and he who should meditate such a change must not only feel by

* When Lord Byron was cut by the great, on account of his quarrel with his wife, he stood leaning on a marble slab at the entrance of a room, while troops of duchesses and countesses passed out. One little, pert, red-haired girl staid a few paces behind the rest; and, as she passed him, said with a nod, "Aye, you should have married me, and then all this wouldn't have happened to you!"

anticipation an utter contempt for the *slough* of humanity which he is prepared to cast, but must feel an absolute void and want of attraction in those lofty and incomprehensible sentiments which are to supply its place. With respect to actual royalty, the spell is in a great measure broken. But, among ancient monarchs, there is no one, I think, who envies Darius or Xerxes. One has a different feeling with respect to Alexander or Pyrrhus; but this is because they were great men as well as great kings, and the soul is up in arms at the mention of their names as at the sound of a trumpet. But as to all the rest — those "in the catalogue who go for kings" — the praying, eating, drinking, dressing monarchs of the earth, in time past or present — one would as soon think of wishing to personate the Golden Calf, or to turn out with Nebuchadnezzar to graze, as to be transformed into one of that "swinish multitude." There is no point of affinity. The extrinsic circumstances are imposing: but, within, there is nothing but morbid humours and proud flesh! Some persons might vote for Charlemagne; and there are others who would have no objection to be the modern Charlemagne, with all he inflicted and suffered, even after the necromantic field of Waterloo, and the bloody wreath on the vacant brow of his conqueror, and that fell jailer set over him by a craven foe, that "glared round his soul, and mocked his closing eyelids!"

It has been remarked, that could we at pleasure change our situation in life, more persons would be found anxious to descend than to ascend in the scale of society. One reason may be, that we have it more in our power to do so; and this encourages the thought, and makes it familiar to us. A second is, that we naturally wish to throw off the cares of state, of fortune or business, that oppress us, and to seek repose before we find it in the grave. A third reason is, that, as we descend to common life, the pleasures are simple,

natural, such as all can enter into, and therefore excite a general interest, and combine all suffrages. Of the different occupations of life, none is beheld with a more pleasing emotion, or less aversion to a change of our own, than that of a shepherd tending his flock: the pastoral ages have been the envy and the theme of all succeeding ones; and a beggar with his crutch is more closely allied than the monarch and his crown to the associations of mirth and heart's-ease. On the other hand, it must be admitted that our pride is too apt to prefer grandeur to happiness; and that our passions make us envy great vices oftener than great virtues.

The world shew their sense in nothing more than in a distrust and aversion to those changes of situation which only tend to make the successful candidates ridiculous, and which do not carry along with them a mind adequate to the circumstances. The common people, in this respect, are more shrewd and judicious than their superiors, from feeling their own awkwardness and incapacity, and often decline, with an instinctive modesty, the troublesome honours intended for them. They do not overlook their original defects so readily as others overlook their acquired advantages. It is wonderful, therefore, that opera-singers and dancers refuse, or only *condescend* as it were, to accept lords, though the latter are so often fascinated by them. The fair performer knows (better than her unsuspecting admirer) how little connection there is between the dazzling figure she makes on the stage and that which she may make in private life, and is in no hurry to convert "the drawing-room into a Green-room." The nobleman (supposing him not to be very wise) is astonished at the miraculous powers of art in

"The fair, the chaste, the inexpressive *she;*"

and thinks such a paragon must easily conform to the routine of manners and society which every trifling woman of qual-

ity of his acquaintance, from sixteen to sixty, goes through without effort. This is a hasty or a wilful conclusion. Things of habit only come by habit, and inspiration here avails nothing. A man of fortune who marries an actress for her fine performance of tragedy, has been well compared to the person who bought Punch. The lady is not unfrequently aware of the inconsequentiality, and unwilling to be put on the shelf, and hid in the nursery of some musty country-mansion. Servant girls, of any sense and spirit, treat their masters (who make serious love to them) with suitable contempt. What is it but a proposal to drag an unmeaning trollop at his heels through life, to her own annoyance and the ridicule of all his friends? No woman, I suspect, ever forgave a man who raised her from a low condition in life (it is a perpetual obligation and reproach); though, I believe, men often feel the most disinterested regard for women under such circumstances. Sancho Panza discovered no less folly in his eagerness to enter upon his new government, than wisdom in quitting it as fast as possible. Why will Mr. Cobbett persist in getting into Parliament? He would find himself no longer the same man. What member of Parliament, I should like to know, could write his Register? As a popular partisan, he may (for aught I can say) be a match for the whole Honourable House; but, by obtaining a seat in St. Stephen's Chapel, he would only be equal to a 576th part of it. It was surely a puerile ambition in Mr. Addington to succeed Mr. Pitt as prime-minister. The situation was only a foil to his imbecility. Gipsies have a fine faculty of evasion: catch them who can in the same place or story twice! Take them; teach them the comforts of civilization; confine them in warm rooms, with thick carpets and down beds; and they will fly out of the window — like the bird, described by Chaucer, out of its golden cage. I maintain that there is

no common language or medium of understanding between people of education and without it — between those who judge of things from books or from their senses. Ignorance has so far the advantage over learning; for it can make an appeal to you from what you know; but you cannot re-act upon it through that which it is a perfect stranger to. Ignorance is, therefore, power. This is what foiled Buonaparte in Spain and Russia. The people can only be gained over by informing them, though they may be enslaved by fraud or force. You say there is a common language in nature. They see nature through their wants, while you look at it for your pleasure. Ask a country lad if he does not like to hear the birds sing in the spring? And he will laugh in your face. "What is it, then, he does like?" — "Good victuals and drink!" As if you had not these too; but because he has them not, he thinks of nothing else, and laughs at you and your refinements, supposing you to live upon air. To those who are deprived of every other advantage, even nature is a *book sealed*. I have made this capital mistake all my life, in imagining that those objects which lay open to all, and excited an interest merely from the *idea* of them, spoke a common language to all; and that nature was a kind of universal home, where all ages, sexes, classes met. Not so. The vital air, the sky, the woods, the streams — all these go for nothing, except with a favoured few. The poor are taken up with their bodily wants — the rich, with external acquisitions: the one, with the sense of property — the other, of its privation. Both have the same distaste for *sentiment*. The *genteel* are the slaves of appearances — the vulgar, of necessity; and neither has the smallest regard to true worth, refinement, generosity. All savages are irreclaimable. I can understand the Irish character better than the Scotch. I hate the formal crust of circumstances and the mechanism of

society. I have been recommended, indeed, to settle down into some respectable profession for life: —

"Ah! why so soon the blossom tear?"

I am "in no haste to be venerable!"

In thinking of those one might wish to have been, many people will exclaim, "Surely, you would like to have been Shakspeare?" Would Garrick have consented to the change? No, nor should he; for the applause which he received, and on which he lived, was more adapted to his genius and taste. If Garrick had agreed to be Shakspeare, he would have made it a previous condition that he was to be a better player. He would have insisted on taking some higher part than *Polonius* or the *Grave-digger*. Ben Jonson and his companions at the Mermaid would not have known their old friend Will in his new disguise. The modern Roscius would have scouted the halting player. He would have shrunk from the parts of the inspired poet. If others were unlike us, we feel it as a presumption and an impertinence to usurp their place; if they were like us, it seems a work of supererogation. We are not to be cozened out of our existence for nothing. It has been ingeniously urged, as an objection to having been Milton, that "then we should not have had the pleasure of reading Paradise Lost." Perhaps I should incline to draw lots with Pope, but that he was deformed, and did not sufficiently relish Milton and Shakspeare. As it is, we can enjoy his verses and theirs too. Why, having these, need we ever be dissatisfied with ourselves? Goldsmith is a person whom I considerably affect, notwithstanding his blunders and his misfortunes. The author of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, and of *Retaliation*, is one whose temper must have had something eminently amiable, delightful, gay, and happy in it.

"A certain tender bloom his fame o'erspreads."

But then I could never make up my mind to his preferring Rowe and Dryden to the worthies of the Elizabethan age; nor could I, in like manner, forgive Sir Joshua — whom I number among those whose existence was marked with a *white stone*, and on whose tomb might be inscribed " Thrice Fortunate! " — his treating Nicholas Poussin with contempt. Differences in matters of taste and opinion are points of honour — " stuff o' the conscience " — stumbling-blocks not to be got over. Others, we easily grant, may have more wit, learning, imagination, riches, strength, beauty, which we should be glad to borrow of them; but that they have sounder or better views of things, or that we should act wisely in changing in this respect, is what we can by no means persuade ourselves. We may not be the lucky possessors of what is best or most desirable; but our notion of what is best and most desirable we will give up to no man by choice or compulsion; and unless others (the greatest wits or brightest geniuses) can come into our way of thinking, we must humbly beg leave to remain as we are. A Calvinistic preacher would not relinquish a single point of faith to be the Pope of Rome; nor would a strict Unitarian acknowledge the mystery of the Holy Trinity to have painted Raphael's *Assembly of the Just*. In the range of *ideal* excellence, we are distracted by variety and repelled by differences: the imagination is fickle and fastidious, and requires a combination of all possible qualifications, which never met. Habit alone is blind and tenacious of the most homely advantages; and after running the tempting round of nature, fame, and fortune, we wrap ourselves up in our familiar recollections and humble pretensions — as the lark, after long fluttering on sunny wing, sinks into its lowly bed!

We can have no very importunate craving, nor very great confidence, in wishing to change characters, except with those with whom we are intimately acquainted by their works;

and having these by us (which is all we know or covet in them), what would we have more? We can have *no more of a cat than her skin;* nor of an author than his brains. By becoming Shakspeare in reality, we cut ourselves out of reading Milton, Pope, Dryden, and a thousand more — all of whom we have in our possession, enjoy, and *are,* by turns, in the best part of them, their thoughts, without any metamorphosis or miracle at all. What a microcosm is ours! What a Proteus is the human mind! All that we know, think of, or can admire, in a manner becomes ourselves. We are not (the meanest of us) a volume, but a whole library! In this calculation of problematical contingencies, the lapse of time makes no difference. One would as soon have been Raphael as any modern artist. Twenty, thirty, or forty years of elegant enjoyment and lofty feeling were as great a luxury in the fifteenth as in the nineteenth century. But Raphael did not live to see Claude, nor Titian Rembrandt. Those who found arts and sciences are not witness of their accumulated results and benefits; nor in general do they reap the meed of praise which is their due. We who come after in some "laggard age," have more enjoyment of their fame than they had. Who would have missed the sight of the Louvre in all its glory to have been one of those whose works enriched it? Would it not have been giving a certain good for an uncertain advantage? No: I am as sure (if it is not presumption to say so) of what passed through Raphael's mind as of what passes through my own; and I know the difference between seeing (though even that is a rare privilege) and producing such perfection. At one time I was so devoted to Rembrandt, that I think, if the Prince of Darkness had made me the offer in some rash mood, I should have been tempted to close with it, and should have become (in happy hour, and in downright earnest) the great master of light and shade!

I have run myself out of my materials for this Essay, and want a well-turned sentence or two to conclude with; like Benvenuto Cellini, who complains that, with all the brass, tin, iron, and lead he could muster in the house, his statue of Perseus was left imperfect, with a dent in the heel of it. Once more then — I believe there is one character that all the world would be glad to change with — which is that of a favoured rival. Even hatred gives way to envy. We would be any thing — a toad in a dungeon — to live upon her smile, which is our all of earthly hope and happiness; nor can we, in our infatuation, conceive that there is any difference of feeling on the subject, or that the pressure of her hand is not in itself divine, making those to whom such bliss is deigned like the Immortal Gods!

LEVANA AND OUR LADIES OF SORROW

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

De Quincey's great title to fame rests upon his faculty for clothing his elaborate and fantastic dreams in a prose of intricate and artificial cadences approximating in their effect to the impression made by music. He himself describes this writing as "impassioned prose" and likes to dwell upon its novelty. It is indeed a rare achievement to add a new note to the range of literary expression, but it is well to observe that while it is daring in its originality, it is as precarious as dancing on a tight-rope. It has given us pages of strange fascination, but it is as abnormal as the acute sensitiveness of the genius that created it, an instrument for evoking things dimly felt in the recesses of consciousness, things beyond the reach of the logic of words, whose emotional value is realized through the indefinable suggestions of music. It was in the *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821) that De Quincey first discovered this note, and it was as a sequel to the *Confessions* that he conceived the series of sketches, entitled *Suspiria de Profundis,* to which the following selection belongs. (*Levana, and Our Ladies of Sorrow* appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine,* June, 1845, and is reprinted in Masson's editions of the *Works,* Vol. XIII.)

LEVANA AND OUR LADIES OF SORROW

OFTENTIMES at Oxford I saw Levana in my dreams. I knew her by her Roman symbols. Who is Levana? Reader, that do not pretend to have leisure for very much scholarship, you will not be angry with me for telling you. Levana was the Roman goddess that performed for the new-born infant the earliest office of ennobling kindness — typical, by its mode, of that grandeur which belongs to man everywhere, and of that benignity in powers invisible which even in Pagan worlds sometimes descends to sustain it. At the very moment of birth, just as the infant tasted for the first time the atmosphere of our troubled planet, it was laid on the ground. *That* might bear different interpretations. But immediately, lest so grand a creature should grovel there for more than one instant, either the paternal hand, as proxy for the goddess Levana, or some near kinsman, as proxy for the father, raised it upright, bade it look erect as the king of all this world, and presented its forehead to the stars, saying, perhaps, in his heart, " Behold what is greater than yourselves ! " This symbolic act represented the function of Levana. And that mysterious lady, who never revealed her face (except to me in dreams), but always acted by delegation, had her name from the Latin verb (as still it is the Italian verb) *levare,* to raise aloft.

This is the explanation of Levana. And hence it has arisen that some people have understood by Levana the tutelary power that controls the education of the nursery. She, that would not suffer at his birth even a prefigurative or mimic

degradation for her awful ward, far less could be supposed to suffer the real degradation attaching to the non-development of his powers. She therefore watches over human education. Now, the word *edŭco,* with the penultimate short, was derived (by a process often exemplified in the crystallisation of languages) from the word *edūco,* with the penultimate long. Whatsoever *educes* or develops — *educates.* By the education of Levana, therefore, is meant — not the poor machinery that moves by spelling-books and grammars, but that mighty system of central forces hidden in the deep bosom of human life, which by passion, by strife, by temptation, by the energies of resistance, works for ever upon children — resting not day or night, any more than the mighty wheel of day and night themselves, whose moments, like restless spokes, are glimmering for ever as they revolve.

If, then, *these* are the ministries by which Levana works, how profoundly must she reverence the agencies of grief! But you, reader, think that children generally are not liable to grief such as mine. There are two senses in the word *generally* — the sense of Euclid where it means *universally* (or in the whole extent of the *genus*), and a foolish sense of this world, where it means *usually.* Now I am far from saying that children universally are capable of grief like mine. But there are more than you ever heard of, who die of grief in this island of ours. I will tell you a common case. The rules of Eton require that a boy on the *foundation* should be there twelve years: he is superannuated at eighteen, consequently he must come at six. Children torn away from mothers and sisters at that age not unfrequently die. I speak of what I know. The complaint is not entered by the registrar as grief; but *that* it is. Grief of that sort, and at that age, has killed more than ever have been counted amongst its martyrs.

Therefore it is that Levana often communes with the pow-

ers that shake man's heart: therefore it is that she dotes upon grief. "These ladies," said I softly to myself, on seeing the ministers with whom Levana was conversing, "these are the Sorrows; and they are three in number, as the *Graces* are three, who dress man's life with beauty; the *Parcae* are three, who weave the dark arras of man's life in their mysterious loom always with colours sad in part, sometimes angry with tragic crimson and black; the *Furies* are three, who visit with retributions called from the other side of the grave offences that walk upon this; and once even the *Muses* were but three, who fit the harp, the trumpet, or the lute, to the great burdens of man's impassioned creations. These are the Sorrows, all three of whom I know." The last words I say *now;* but in Oxford I said — "one of whom I know, and the others too surely I *shall* know." For already, in my fervent youth, I saw (dimly relieved upon the dark background of my dreams) the imperfect lineaments of the awful sisters. These sisters — by what name shall we call them?

If I say simply — "The Sorrows," there will be a chance of mistaking the term; it might be understood of individual sorrow — separate cases of sorrow, — whereas I want a term expressing the mighty abstractions that incarnate themselves in all individual sufferings of man's heart; and I wish to have these abstractions presented as impersonations, that is, as clothed with human attributes of life, and with functions pointing to flesh. Let us call them, therefore, *Our Ladies of Sorrow*. I know them thoroughly, and have walked in all their kingdoms. Three sisters they are, of one mysterious household; and their paths are wide apart; but of their dominion there is no end. Them I saw often conversing with Levana, and sometimes about myself. Do they talk, then? Oh, no! Mighty phantoms like these disdain the infirmities of language. They may utter voices through the organs of man when they dwell in human hearts, but amongst them-

selves is no voice nor sound — eternal silence reigns in *their* kingdoms. *They* spoke not as they talked with Levana. *They* whispered not. *They* sang not. Though oftentimes methought they *might* have sung; for I upon earth had heard their mysteries oftentimes deciphered by harp and timbrel, by dulcimer and organ. Like God, whose servants they are, they utter their pleasure, not by sounds that perish, or by words that go astray, but by signs in heaven — by changes on earth — by pulses in secret rivers — heraldries painted on darkness — and hieroglyphics written on the tablets of the brain. *They* wheeled in mazes; *I* spelled the steps. *They* telegraphed from afar; *I* read the signals. *They* conspired together; and on the mirrors of darkness *my* eye traced the plots. *Theirs* were the symbols, — *mine* are the words.

What is it the sisters are? What is it that they do? Let me describe their form, and their presence; if form it were that still fluctuated in its outline; or presence it were that for ever advanced to the front, or for ever receded amongst shades.

The eldest of the three is named *Mater Lachrymarum*, Our Lady of Tears. She it is that night and day raves and moans, calling for vanished faces. She stood in Rama, where a voice was heard of lamentation — Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted. She it was that stood in Bethlehem on the night when Herod's sword swept its nurseries of Innocents, and the little feet were stiffened for ever, which, heard at times as they tottered along floors overhead, woke pulses of love in household hearts that were not unmarked in heaven.

Her eyes are sweet and subtle, wild and sleepy by turns; oftentimes rising to the clouds, oftentimes challenging the heavens. She wears a diadem round her head. And I knew by childish memories that she could go abroad upon the winds, when she heard the sobbing of litanies or the thunder-

ing of organs, and when she beheld the mustering of summer clouds. This sister, the elder, it is that carries keys more than papal at her girdle, which open every cottage and every palace. She, to my knowledge, sate all last summer by the bedside of the blind beggar, him that so often and so gladly I talked with, whose pious daughter, eight years old, with the sunny countenance, resisted the temptations of play and village mirth to travel all day long on dusty roads with her afflicted father. For this did God send her a great reward. In the springtime of the year, and whilst yet her own spring was budding, He recalled her to Himself. But her blind father mourns for ever over *her;* still he dreams at midnight that the little guiding hand is locked within his own; and still he wakens to a darkness that is *now* within a second and a deeper darkness. This *Mater Lachrymarum* also has been sitting all this winter of 1844–5 within the bedchamber of the Czar, bringing before his eyes a daughter (not less pious) that vanished to God not less suddenly, and left behind her a darkness not less profound. By the power of her keys it is that Our Lady of Tears glides a ghostly intruder into the chambers of sleepless men, sleepless women, sleepless children, from Ganges to the Nile, from Nile to Mississippi. And her, because she is the first-born of her house, and has the widest empire, let us honour with the title of " Madonna."

The second sister is called *Mater Suspiriorum,* Our Lady of Sighs. She never scales the clouds, nor walks abroad upon the winds. She wears no diadem. And her eyes, if they were ever seen, would be neither sweet nor subtle; no man could read their story; they would be found filled with perishing dreams, and with wrecks of forgotten delirium. But she raises not her eyes; her head, on which sits a dilapidated turban, droops for ever; for ever fastens on the dust. She weeps not. She groans not. But she sighs in-

audibly at intervals. Her sister, Madonna, is oftentimes stormy and frantic; raging in the highest against heaven; and demanding back her darlings. But Our Lady of Sighs never clamours, never defies, dreams not of rebellious aspirations. She is humble to abjectness. Hers is the meekness that belongs to the hopeless. Murmur she may, but it is in her sleep. Whisper she may, but it is to herself in the twilight. Mutter she does at times, but it is in solitary places that are desolate as she is desolate, in ruined cities, and when the sun has gone down to his rest. This sister is the visitor of the Pariah, of the Jew, of the bondsman to the oar in Mediterranean galleys, of the English criminal in Norfolk Island, blotted out from the books of remembrance in sweet far-off England, of the baffled penitent reverting his eyes for ever upon a solitary grave, which to him seems the altar overthrown of some past and bloody sacrifice, on which altar no oblations can now be availing, whether towards pardon that he might implore, or towards reparation that he might attempt. Every slave that at noonday looks up to the tropical sun with timid reproach, as he points with one hand to the earth, our general mother, but for *him* a stepmother, as he points with the other hand to the Bible, our general teacher, but against *him* sealed and sequestered; — every woman sitting in darkness, without love to shelter her head, or hope to illumine her solitude, because the heaven-born instincts kindling in her nature germs of holy affections, which God implanted in her womanly bosom, having been stifled by social necessities, now burn sullenly to waste, like sepulchral lamps amongst the ancients; — every nun defrauded of her unreturning May-time by wicked kinsmen, whom God will judge; — every captive in every dungeon; — all that are betrayed, and all that are rejected; outcasts by traditionary law, and children of *hereditary* disgrace — all these walk with Our Lady of Sighs. She also

carries a key; but she needs it little. For her kingdom is chiefly amongst the tents of Shem, and the houseless vagrant of every clime. Yet in the very highest ranks of man she finds chapels of her own; and even in glorious England there are some that, to the world, carry their heads as proudly as the reindeer, who yet secretly have received her mark upon their foreheads.

But the third sister, who is also the youngest! — Hush! whisper, whilst we talk of *her!* Her kingdom is not large, or else no flesh should live; but within that kingdom all power is hers. Her head, turreted like that of Cybele, rises almost beyond the reach of sight. She droops not; and her eyes rising so high, *might* be hidden by distance. But, being what they are, they cannot be hidden; through the treble veil of crape which she wears, the fierce light of a blazing misery, that rests not for matins or for vespers — for noon of day or noon of night — for ebbing or for flowing tide — may be read from the very ground. She is the defier of God. She also is the mother of lunacies, and the suggestress of suicides. Deep lie the roots of her power; but narrow is the nation that she rules. For she can approach only those in whom a profound nature has been upheaved by central convulsions; in whom the heart trembles and the brain rocks under conspiracies of tempest from without and tempest from within. Madonna moves with uncertain steps, fast or slow, but still with tragic grace. Our Lady of Sighs creeps timidly and stealthily. But this youngest sister moves with incalculable motions, bounding, and with a tiger's leaps. She carries no key; for, though coming rarely amongst men, she storms all doors at which she is permitted to enter at all. And *her* name is *Mater Tenebrarum* — Our Lady of Darkness.

These were the *Semnai Theai,* or Sublime Goddesses; these were the *Eumenides* or Gracious Ladies (so called by

antiquity in shuddering propitiation) — of my Oxford dreams. Madonna spoke. She spoke by her mysterious hand. Touching my head, she beckoned to Our Lady of Sighs; and *what* she spoke, translated out of the signs which (except in dreams) no man reads, was this: —

"Lo! here is he whom in childhood I dedicated to my altars. This is he that once I made my darling. Him I led astray, him I beguiled, and from heaven I stole away his young heart to mine. Through me did he become idolatrous; and through me it was, by languishing desires, that he worshipped the worm, and prayed to the wormy grave. Holy was the grave to him; lovely was its darkness; saintly its corruption. Him, this young idolater, I have seasoned for thee, dear gentle Sister of Sighs! Do thou take him now to *thy* heart, and season him for our dreadful sister. And thou" — turning to the *Mater Tenebrarum,* she said — "wicked sister, that temptest and hatest, do thou take him from *her.* See that thy sceptre lie heavy on his head. Suffer not woman and her tenderness to sit near him in his darkness. Banish the frailties of hope — wither the relentings of love — scorch the fountains of tears: curse him as only thou canst curse. So shall he be accomplished in the furnace — so shall he see the things that ought *not* to be seen — sights that are abominable, and secrets that are unutterable. So shall he read elder truths, sad truths, grand truths, fearful truths. So shall he rise again *before* he dies. And so shall our commission be accomplished which from God we had — to plague his heart until we had unfolded the capacities of his spirit."

ON HISTORY

THOMAS CARLYLE

Carlyle's essay is of interest as a statement of the philosophical attitude toward history. It is a protest against the narrow, mechanical and materialistic interpretation of events, with the exaggerated emphasis on wars and politics which once characterized the writing of history. It sketches the manifold activities which constitute the life of the human race and poses the problem of which in our own educational system, with the increasing subdivision of knowledge into separate departments, we are becoming more and more keenly aware — how to present the separate provinces of knowledge so as to give an idea of the essential connection between them as revelations of a single spirit. The depth and comprehensiveness of Carlyle's own view are impressive. He has produced the most imaginative and sympathetic treatments of historical events and personages in his *French Revolution, Heroes and Hero Worship, Cromwell,* and *Frederick the Great.* From the point of view of style it is interesting to observe how a discussion which in the hands of most writers would probably become formal and abstract, is invested with a sense of life. There is a thrill of energy in every sentence of Carlyle, a feeling of something vital and vibrant and significant in every statement. This power to make ideas seem alive is the clearest mark of an original writer, and in this instance, moreover, the originality of Carlyle is quite free from the violent mannerisms which are prominent in some of his famous works. (*On History* appeared in *Fraser's Magazine,* November, 1830, and was reprinted in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays,* Vol. II, 1839.)

ON HISTORY

CLIO was figured by the ancients as the eldest daughter of Memory, and chief of the Muses; which dignity, whether we regard the essential qualities of her art, or its practice and acceptance among men, we shall still find to have been fitly bestowed. History, as it lies at the root of all science, is also the first distinct product of man's spiritual nature; his earliest expression of what can be called Thought. It is a looking both before and after; as, indeed, the coming Time already waits, unseen, yet definitely shaped, predetermined and inevitable, in the Time come; and only by the combination of both is the meaning of either completed. The Sibylline Books, though old, are not the oldest. Some nations have prophecy, some have not: but of all mankind, there is no tribe so rude that it has not attempted History, though several have not arithmetic enough to count Five. History has been written with quipo-threads, with feather-pictures, with wampum-belts; still oftener with earth-mounds and monumental stone-heaps, whether as pyramid or cairn; for the Celt and the Copt, the Red man as well as the White, lives between two eternities, and warring against Oblivion, he would fain unite himself in clear conscious relation, as in dim unconscious relation he is already united, with the whole Future, and the whole Past.

A talent for History may be said to be born with us, as our chief inheritance. In a certain sense all men are historians. Is not every memory written quite full with Annals, wherein joy and mourning, conquest and loss manifoldly alternate; and, with or without philosophy, the whole fortunes of one

little inward Kingdom, and all its politics, foreign and domestic, stand ineffaceably recorded? Our very speech is curiously historical. Most men, you may observe, speak only to narrate; not in imparting what they have thought, which indeed were often a very small matter, but in exhibiting what they have undergone or seen, which is a quite unlimited one, do talkers dilate. Cut us off from Narrative, how would the stream of conversation, even among the wisest, languish into detached handfuls, and among the foolish utterly evaporate! Thus, as we do nothing but enact History, we say little but recite it: nay rather, in that widest sense, our whole spiritual life is built thereon. For, strictly considered, what is all Knowledge too but recorded Experience, and a product of History; of which, therefore, Reasoning and Belief, no less than Action and Passion, are essential materials?

Under a limited, and the only practicable shape, History proper, that part of History which treats of remarkable action, has, in all modern as well as ancient times, ranked among the highest arts, and perhaps never stood higher than in these times of ours. For whereas, of old, the charm of History lay chiefly in gratifying our common appetite for the wonderful, for the unknown; and her office was but as that of a Minstrel and Story-teller, she has now farther become a School-mistress, and professes to instruct in gratifying. Whether, with the stateliness of that venerable character, she may not have taken up something of its austerity and frigidity; whether in the logical terseness of a Hume or Robertson, the graceful ease and gay pictorial heartiness of a Herodotus or Froissart may not be wanting, is not the question for us here. Enough that all learners, all inquiring minds of every order, are gathered round her footstool, and reverently pondering her lessons, as the true basis of Wisdom. Poetry, Divinity, Politics, Physics, have each their

adherents and adversaries; each little guild supporting a defensive and offensive war for its own special domain; while the domain of History is as a Free Emporium, where all these belligerents peaceably meet and furnish themselves; and Sentimentalist and Utilitarian, Sceptic and Theologian, with one voice advise us: Examine History, for it is "Philosophy teaching by Experience."

Far be it from us to disparage such teaching, the very attempt at which must be precious. Neither shall we too rigidly inquire: How much it has hitherto profited? Whether most of what little practical wisdom men have, has come from study of professed History, or from other less boasted sources, whereby, as matters now stand, a Marlborough may become great in the world's business, with no History save what he derives from Shakspeare's Plays? Nay, whether in that same teaching by Experience, historical Philosophy has yet properly deciphered the first element of all science in this kind: What the aim and significance of that wondrous changeful Life it investigates and paints may be? Whence the course of man's destinies in this Earth originated, and whither they are tending? Or, indeed, if they have any course and tendency, are really guided forward by an unseen mysterious Wisdom, or only circle in blind mazes without recognizable guidance? Which questions, altogether fundamental, one might think, in any Philosophy of History, have, since the era when Monkish Annalists were wont to answer them by the long-ago extinguished light of their Missal and Breviary, been by most philosophical Historians only glanced at dubiously from afar; by many, not so much as glanced at.

The truth is, two difficulties, never wholly surmountable, lie in the way. Before Philosophy can teach by Experience, the Philosophy has to be in readiness, the Experience must be gathered and intelligibly recorded. Now, overlooking the former consideration, and with regard only to the latter, let

any one who has examined the current of human affairs, and how intricate, perplexed, unfathomable, even when seen into with our own eyes, are their thousand-fold blending movements, say whether the true representing of it is easy or impossible. Social Life is the aggregate of all the individual men's Lives who constitute society; History is the essence of innumerable Biographies. But if one Biography, nay our own Biography, study and recapitulate it as we may, remains in so many points unintelligible to us; how much more must these million, the very facts of which, to say nothing of the purport of them, we know not, and cannot know!

Neither will it adequately avail us to assert that the general inward condition of Life is the same in all ages; and that only the remarkable deviations from the common endowment and common lot, and the more important variations which the outward figure of Life has from time to time undergone, deserve memory and record. The inward condition of Life, it may rather be affirmed, the conscious or half-conscious aim of mankind, so far as men are not mere digesting-machines, is the same in no two ages; neither are the more important outward variations easy to fix on, or always well capable of representation. Which was the greatest innovator, which was the more important personage in man's history, he who first led armies over the Alps, and gained the victories of Cannæ and Thrasymene; or the nameless boor who first hammered out for himself an iron spade? When the oak-tree is felled, the whole forest echoes with it; but a hundred acorns are planted silently by some unnoticed breeze. Battles and war-tumults, which for the time din every ear, and with joy or terror intoxicate every heart, pass away like tavern-brawls; and, except some few Marathons and Morgartens, are remembered by accident, not by desert. Laws themselves, political Constitutions, are not our Life, but only the house wherein our Life is led: nay, they are but the

bare walls of the house: all whose essential furniture, the inventions and traditions, and daily habits that regulate and support our existence, are the work not of Dracos and Hampdens, but of Phœnician mariners, of Italian masons and Saxon metallurgists, of philosophers, alchymists, prophets, and all the long-forgotten train of artists and artisans; who from the first have been jointly teaching us how to think and how to act, how to rule over spiritual and over physical Nature. Well may we say that of our History the more important part is lost without recovery; and, — as thanksgivings were once wont to be offered "for unrecognized mercies," — look with reverence into the dark untenanted places of the Past, where, in formless oblivion, our chief benefactors, with all their sedulous endeavours, but not with the fruit of these, lie entombed.

So imperfect is that same Experience, by which Philosophy is to teach. Nay, even with regard to those occurrences which do stand recorded, which, at their origin have seemed worthy of record, and the summary of which constitutes what we now call History, is not our understanding of them altogether incomplete; is it even possible to represent them as they were? The old story of Sir Walter Raleigh's looking from his prison-window, on some street tumult, which afterwards three witnesses reported in three different ways, himself differing from them all, is still a true lesson for us. Consider how it is that historical documents and records originate; even honest records, where the reporters were unbiased by personal regard; a case which, were nothing more wanted, must ever be among the rarest. The real leading features of a historical Transaction, those movements that essentially characterise it, and alone deserve to be recorded, are nowise the foremost to be noted. At first, among the various witnesses, who are also parties interested, there is only vague wonder, and fear or hope, and the noise of

Rumour's thousand tongues; till, after a season, the conflict of testimonies has subsided into some general issue; and then it is settled, by majority of votes, that such and such a "Crossing of the Rubicon," an "Impeachment of Strafford," a "Convocation of the Notables," are epochs in the world's history, cardinal points on which grand world-revolutions have hinged. Suppose, however, that the majority of votes was all wrong; that the real cardinal points lay far deeper: and had been passed over unnoticed, because no Seer, but only mere Onlookers, chanced to be there! Our clock strikes when there is a change from hour to hour; but no hammer in the Horologe of Time peals through the universe when there is a change from Era to Era. Men understand not what is among their hands: as calmness is the characteristic of strength, so the weightiest causes may be most silent. It is, in no case, the real historical Transaction, but only some more or less plausible scheme and theory of the Transaction, or the harmonized result of many such schemes, each varying from the other and all varying from truth, that we can ever hope to behold.

Nay, were our faculty of insight into passing things never so complete, there is still a fatal discrepancy between our manner of observing these, and their manner of occurring. The most gifted man can observe, still more can record, only the *series* of his own impressions: his observation, therefore, to say nothing of its other imperfections, must be *successive,* while the things done were often *simultaneous;* the things done were not a series, but a group. It is not in acted, as it is in written History: actual events are nowise so simply related to each other as parent and offspring are; every single event is the offspring not of one, but of all other events, prior or contemporaneous, and will in its turn combine with all others to give birth to new: it is an ever-living, ever-working Chaos of Being, wherein shape after shape bodies itself

forth from innumerable elements. And this Chaos, boundless as the habitation and duration of man, unfathomable as the soul and destiny of man, is what the historian will depict, and scientifically gauge, we may say, by threading it with single lines of a few ells in length! For as all Action is, by its nature, to be figured as extended in breadth and in depth, as well as in length; that is to say, is based on Passion and Mystery, if we investigate its origin; and spreads abroad on all hands, modifying and modified; as well as advances towards completion, — so all Narrative is, by its nature, of only one dimension; only travels forward towards one, or towards successive points: Narrative is *linear*, Action is *solid*. Alas for our "chains," or chainlets, of "causes and effects," which we so assiduously track through certain handbreadths of years and square miles, when the whole is a broad, deep Immensity, and each atom is "chained" and complected with all! Truly, if History is Philosophy teaching by Experience, the writer fitted to compose History is hitherto an unknown man. The Experience itself would require All-knowledge to record it, — were the All-wisdom needful for such Philosophy as would interpret it, to be had for asking. Better were it that mere earthly Historians should lower such pretensions, more suitable for Omniscience than for human science; and aiming only at some picture of the things acted, which picture itself will at best be a poor approximation, leave the inscrutable purport of them an acknowledged secret; or at most, in reverent Faith, far different from that teaching of Philosophy, pause over the mysterious vestiges of Him, whose path is in the great deep of Time, whom History indeed reveals, but only all History, and in Eternity, will clearly reveal.

Such considerations truly were of small profit, did they, instead of teaching us vigilance and reverent humility in our inquiries into History, abate our esteem for them, or discour-

age us from unweariedly prosecuting them. Let us search more and more into the Past; let all men explore it, as the true fountain of knowledge; by whose light alone, consciously or unconsciously employed, can the Present and the Future be interpreted or guessed at. For though the whole meaning lies far beyond our ken; yet in that complex Manuscript, covered over with formless inextricably-entangled unknown characters, — nay, which is a *Palimpsest*, and had once prophetic writing, still dimly legible there, — some letters, some words, may be deciphered; and if no complete Philosophy, here and there an intelligible precept, available in practice, be gathered: well understanding, in the mean while, that it is only a little portion we have deciphered; that much still remains to be interpreted; that History is a real Prophetic Manuscript, and can be fully interpreted by no man.

But the Artist in History may be distinguished from the Artisan in History; for here, as in all other provinces, there are Artists and Artisans; men who labour mechanically in a department, without eye for the Whole, not feeling that there is a Whole; and men who inform and ennoble the humblest department with an Idea of the Whole, and habitually know that only in the Whole is the Partial to be truly discerned. The proceedings and the duties of these two, in regard to History, must be altogether different. Not, indeed, that each has not a real worth, in his several degree. The simple husbandman can till his field, and by knowledge he has gained of its soil, sow it with the fit grain, though the deep rocks and central fires are unknown to him: his little crop hangs under and over the firmament of stars, and sails through whole untracked celestial spaces, between Aries and Libra; nevertheless, it ripens for him in due season, and he gathers it safe into his barn. As a husbandman he is blameless in disregarding those higher wonders; but as a thinker, and

faithful inquirer into Nature, he were wrong. So likewise is it with the Historian, who examines some special aspect of History; and from this or that combination of circumstances, political, moral, economical, and the issues it has led to, infers that such and such properties belong to human society, and that the like circumstances will produce the like issue; which inference, if other trials confirm it, must be held true and practically valuable. He is wrong only, and an artisan, when he fancies that these properties, discovered or discoverable, exhaust the matter; and sees not, at every step, that it is inexhaustible.

However, that class of cause-and-effect speculators, with whom no wonder would remain wonderful, but all things in Heaven and Earth must be computed and "accounted for"; and even the Unknown, the Infinite in man's Life, had, under the words *enthusiasm, superstition, spirit of the age* and so forth, obtained, as it were, an algebraical symbol and given value, — have now well-nigh played their part in European culture; and may be considered, as in most countries, even in England itself where they linger the latest, verging towards extinction. He who reads the inscrutable Book of Nature as if it were a Merchant's Ledger, is justly suspected of having never seen that Book, but only some school Synopsis thereof; from which, if taken for the real Book, more error than insight is to be derived.

Doubtless also, it is with a growing feeling of the infinite nature of History, that in these times, the old principle, division of labor, has been so widely applied to it. The Political Historian, once almost the sole cultivator of History, has now found various associates, who strive to elucidate other phases of human Life; of which, as hinted above, the political conditions it is passed under are but one, and though the primary, perhaps not the most important, of the many outward arrangements. Of this Historian himself, moreover,

in his own special department, new and higher things are beginning to be expected. From of old, it was too often to be reproachfully observed of him, that he dwelt with disproportionate fondness in Senate-houses, in Battle-fields, nay, even in Kings' Antechambers; forgetting, that far away from such scenes, the mighty tide of Thought and Action was still rolling on its wondrous course, in gloom and brightness; and in its thousand remote valleys, a whole world of Existence, with or without an earthly sun of Happiness to warm it, with or without a heavenly sun of Holiness to purify and sanctify it, was blossoming and fading, whether the "famous victory" were won or lost. The time seems coming when much of this must be amended; and he who sees no world but that of courts and camps; and writes only how soldiers were drilled and shot, and how this ministerial conjurer out-conjured that other, and then guided, or at least held, something which he called the rudder of Government, but which was rather the spigot of Taxation, wherewith, in place of steering, he could tap, and the more cunningly the nearer the lees, — will pass for a more or less instructive Gazetteer, but will no longer be called a Historian.

However, the Political Historian, were his work performed with all conceivable perfection, can accomplish but a part, and still leaves room for numerous fellow-labourers. Foremost among these comes the Ecclesiastical Historian; endeavouring, with catholic or sectarian view, to trace the progress of the Church; of that portion of the social establishments, which respects our religious condition; as the other portion does our civil, or rather, in the long-run, our economical condition. Rightly conducted, this department were undoubtedly the more important of the two; inasmuch as it concerns us more to understand how man's moral well-being had been and might be promoted, than to understand in the like sort his physical well-being; which latter is

ultimately the aim of all Political arrangements. For the physically happiest is simply the safest, the strongest; and, in all conditions of Government, Power (whether of wealth as in these days, or of arms and adherents as in old days) is the only outward emblem and purchase-money of Good. True Good, however, unless we reckon Pleasure synonymous with it, is said to be rarely, or rather never, offered for sale in the market where that coin passes current. So that, for man's true advantage, not the outward condition of his life, but the inward and spiritual, is of prime influence; not the form of Government he lives under, and the power he can accumulate there, but the Church he is a member of, and the degree of moral elevation he can acquire by means of its instruction. Church History, then, did it speak wisely, would have momentous secrets to teach us: nay, in its highest degree, it were a sort of continued Holy Writ; our Sacred Books being, indeed, only a History of the primeval Church, as it first arose in man's soul, and symbolically embodied itself in his external life. How far our actual Church Historians fall below such unattainable standards, nay below quite attainable approximations thereto, we need not point out. Of the Ecclesiastical Historian we have to complain, as we did of his Political fellow-craftsman, that his inquiries turn rather on the outward mechanism, the mere hulls and superficial accidents of the object, than on the object itself: as if the Church lay in Bishops' Chapter-houses, and Ecumenic Council-halls, and Cardinals' Conclaves, and not far more in the hearts of Believing Men; in whose walk and conversation, as influenced thereby, its chief manifestations were to be looked for, and its progress or decline ascertained. The History of the Church is a History of the Invisible as well as of the Visible Church; which latter, if disjoined from the former, is but a vacant edifice; gilded,

it may be, and overhung with old votive gifts, yet useless, nay, pestilentially unclean; to write whose history is less important than to forward its downfall.

Of a less ambitious character are the Histories that relate to special separate provinces of human Action; to Sciences, Practical Arts, Institutions and the like; matters which do not imply an epitome of man's whole interest and form of life; but wherein, though each is still connected with all, the spirit of each, at least its material results, may be in some degree evolved without so strict a reference to that of the others. Highest in dignity and difficulty, under this head, would be our histories of Philosophy, of man's opinions and theories respecting the nature of his Being, and relations to the Universe Visible and Invisible: which History, indeed, were it fitly treated, or fit for right treatment, would be a province of Church History; the logical or dogmatical province thereof; for Philosophy, in its true sense, is or should be the soul, of which Religion, Worship is the body; in the healthy state of things the Philosopher and Priest were one and the same. But Philosophy itself is far enough from wearing this character; neither have its Historians been men, generally speaking, that could in the smallest degree approximate it thereto. Scarcely since the rude era of the Magi and Druids has that same healthy identification of Priest and Philosopher had place in any country: but rather the worship of divine things, and the scientific investigation of divine things, have been in quite different hands, their relations not friendly but hostile. Neither have the Brückers and Bühles, to say nothing of the many unhappy Enfields who have treated of that latter department, been more than barren reporters, often unintelligent and unintelligible reporters, of the doctrine uttered; without force to discover how the doctrine originated, or what reference it bore to its

time and country, to the spiritual position of mankind there and then. Nay, such a task did not perhaps lie before them, as a thing to be attempted.

Art also and Literature are intimately blended with Religion; as it were, outworks and abutments, by which that highest pinnacle in our inward world gradually connects itself with the general level, and becomes accessible therefrom. He who should write a proper History of Poetry, would depict for us the successive Revelations which man had obtained of the Spirit of Nature; under what aspects he had caught and endeavored to body forth some glimpse of that unspeakable Beauty, which in its highest clearness is Religion, is the inspiration of a Prophet, yet in one or the other degree must inspire every true Singer, were his theme never so humble. We should see by what steps men had ascended to the Temple; how near they had approached; by what ill hap they had, for long periods, turned away from it, and grovelled on the plain with no music in the air, or blindly struggled towards other heights. That among all our Eichhorns and Wartons there is no such Historian, must be too clear to every one. Nevertheless let us not despair of far nearer approaches to that excellence. Above all, let us keep the Ideal of it ever in our eye; for thereby alone have we even a chance to reach it.

Our histories of Laws and Constitutions, wherein many a Montesquieu and Hallam has labored with acceptance, are of a much simpler nature; yet deep enough if thoroughly investigated; and useful, when authentic, even with little depth. Then we have Histories of Medicine, of Mathematics, of Astronomy, Commerce, Chivalry, Monkery; and Goguets and Beckmanns have come forward with what might be the most bountiful contribution of all, a History of Inventions. Of all which sorts, and many more not here enumerated, not

yet devised and put in practice, the merit and the proper scheme may, in our present limits, require no exposition.

In this manner, though, as above remarked, all Action is extended three ways, and the general sum of human Action is a whole Universe, with all limits of it unknown, does History strive by running path after path, through the Impassable, in manifold directions and intersections, to secure for us some oversight of the Whole; in which endeavor, if each Historian look well around him from his path, tracking it out with the *eye*, not, as is more common, with the *nose*, she may at last prove not altogether unsuccessful. Praying only that increased division of labour do not here, as elsewhere, aggravate our already strong Mechanical tendencies, so that in the manual dexterity for parts we lose all command over the whole, and the hope of any Philosophy of History be farther off than ever, — let us all wish her great and greater success.

POLITICS

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Of all those who have written essays in the informal style in English, Emerson is, with Carlyle, the most philosophic. He deals with the root questions of conduct and society, bringing to them elevation of outlook and ideal serenity. His composition does not progress with an orderly march, but there is a constant centre from which his ideas radiate. His typical mode of utterance is therefore gnomic — luminous flashes of wisdom that keep the reader in touch with the heart of his thought. There is such concreteness and tangibleness in his illustrations, such direct reference to immediate conditions, such true observation of particular facts, that the feeling of reality and "familiarity" is imparted to ideal generalization. There is, furthermore, the deeply personal and poetic quality of the vision by which to identify Emerson with the authentic essayists. The principal thought in *Politics* is that an ideal government trains the characters of its citizens and that when the characters of the citizens are properly formed government becomes unnecessary. It is the creed of pure individualism. In the application of this idea to American conditions Emerson pronounces some criticisms on our system of government and on our parties which are as applicable to-day as they were a hundred years ago. (*Politics* appeared in *Essays, Second Series,* 1844.)

POLITICS

Gold and iron are good
To buy iron and gold;
All earth's fleece and food
For their like are sold.
Boded Merlin wise,
Proved Napoleon great,—
Nor kind nor coinage buys
Aught above its rate.
Fear, Craft, and Avarice
Cannot rear a State.
Out of dust to build
What is more than dust,—
Walls Amphion piled
Phœbus stablish must.
When the Muses nine
With the Virtues meet,
Find to their design
An Atlantic seat,
By green orchard boughs
Fended from the heat,
Where the statesman ploughs
Furrow for the wheat;
When the Church is social worth,
When the state-house is the hearth,
Then the perfect State is come,
The republican at home.

IN dealing with the State, we ought to remember that its institutions are not aboriginal, though they existed before we were born: that they are not superior to the citizen: that every one of them was once the act of a single man:

every law and usage was a man's expedient to meet a particular case: that they all are imitable, all alterable; we may make as good; we may make better. Society is an illusion to the young citizen. It lies before him in rigid repose, with certain names, men, and institutions, rooted like oak-trees to the centre, round which all arrange themselves the best they can. But the old statesman knows that society is fluid; there are no such roots and centres; but any particle may suddenly become the centre of the movement, and compel like Pisistratus, or Cromwell, does for a time, and every man of truth, like Plato, or Paul, does for ever. But politics rest on necessary foundations, and cannot be treated with levity. Republics abound in young civilians, who believe that the laws make the city, that grave modifications of the policy and modes of living, and employments of the population, that commerce, education, and religion, may be voted in or out; and that any measure, though it were absurd, may be imposed on a people, if only you can get sufficient voices to make it a law. But the wise know that foolish legislation is a rope of sand, which perishes in the twisting; that the State must follow, and not lead the character and progress of the citizen; the strongest usurper is quickly got rid of; and they only who build on Ideas, build for eternity: and that the form of government which prevails, is the expression of what cultivation exists in the population which permits it. The law is only a memorandum. We are superstitious, and esteem the statute somewhat: so much life as it has in the character of living men, is its force. The statute stands there to say, yesterday we agreed so and so, but how feel ye this article to-day? Our statute is a currency, which we stamp with our own portrait: it soon becomes unrecognizable, and in process of time will return to the mint. Nature is not democratic, nor limited-monarchical, but despotic, and will not be fooled or

abated of any jot of her authority, by the pertest of her sons: and as fast as the public mind is open to more intelligence, the code is seen to be brute and stammering. It speaks not articulately, and must be made to. Meantime the education of the general mind never stops. The reveries of the true and simple are prophetic. What the tender poetic youth dreams, and prays, and paints to-day, but shuns the ridicule of saying aloud, shall presently be the resolutions of public bodies, then shall be carried as grievance and bill of rights through conflict and war, and then shall be triumphant law and establishment for a hundred years, until it gives place, in turn, to new prayers and pictures. The history of the State sketches in coarse outline the progress of thought, and follows at a distance the delicacy of culture and of aspiration.

The theory of politics, which has possessed the mind of men, and which they have expressed the best they could in their laws and in their revolutions, considers persons and property as the two objects for whose protection government exists. Of persons, all have equal rights, in virtue of being identical in nature. This interest, of course, with its whole power demands a democracy. Whilst the rights of all as persons are equal, in virtue of their access to reason, their rights in property are very unequal. One man owns his clothes, and another owns a county. This accident, depending, primarily, on the skill and virtue of the parties, of which there is every degree, and, secondarily, on patrimony, falls unequally, and its rights, of course, are unequal. Personal rights, universally the same, demand a government framed on the ratio of the census: property demands a government framed on the ratio of owners and of owning. Laban, who has flocks and herds, wishes them looked after by an officer on the frontiers, lest the Midianites shall drive them off, and pays a tax to that end. Jacob has no flocks

or herds, and no fear of the Midianites, and pays no tax to the officer. It seemed fit that Laban and Jacob should have equal rights to elect the officer, who is to defend their persons, but that Laban, and not Jacob, should elect the officer who is to guard the sheep and cattle. And, if the question arise whether additional officers or watch-towers should be provided, must not Laban and Isaac, and those who must sell part of their herds to buy protection for the rest, judge better of this, and with more right, than Jacob, who, because he is a youth and a traveller, eats their bread and not his own?

In the earliest society the proprietors made their own wealth, and so long as it comes to the owners in the direct way, no other opinion would arise in any equitable community, than that property should make the law for property, and persons the law for persons.

But property passes through donation or inheritance to those who do not create it. Gift, in one case, makes it as really the new owner's, as labor made it the first owner's: in the other case, of patrimony, the law makes an ownership, which will be valid in each man's view according to the estimate which he sets on the public tranquillity.

It was not, however, found easy to embody the readily-admitted principle, that property should make law for property, and persons for persons: since persons and property mixed themselves in every transaction. At last it seemed settled, that the rightful distinction was, that the proprietors should have more elective franchise than non-proprietors, on the Spartan principle of "calling that which is just, equal; not that which is equal, just."

That principle no longer looks so self-evident as it appeared in former times, partly, because doubts have arisen whether too much weight had not been allowed in the laws to property, and such a structure given to our usages, as

allowed the rich to encroach on the poor, and to keep them poor; but mainly, because there is an instinctive sense, however obscure and yet inarticulate, that the whole constitution of property, on its present tenures, is injurious, and its influence on persons deteriorating and degrading; that truly, the only interest for the consideration of the State, is persons: that property will always follow persons; that the highest end of government is the culture of men: and if men can be educated, the institutions will share their improvement, and the moral sentiment will write the law of the land.

If it be not easy to settle the equity of this question, the peril is less when we take note of our natural defences. We are kept by better guards than the vigilance of such magistrates as we commonly elect. Society always consists, in greatest part, of young and foolish persons. The old, who have seen through the hypocrisy of courts and statesmen, die, and leave no wisdom to their sons. They believe their own newspapers, as their fathers did at their age. With such an ignorant and deceivable majority, States would soon run to ruin, but that there are limitations, beyond which the folly and ambition of governors cannot go. Things have their laws, as well as men; and things refuse to be trifled with. Property will be protected. Corn will not grow, unless it is planted and manured; but the farmer will not plant or hoe it, unless the chances are a hundred to one, that he will cut and harvest it. Under any forms, persons and property must and will have their just sway. They exert their power, as steadily as matter its attraction. Cover up a pound of earth never so cunningly, divide and subdivide it; melt it to liquid, convert it to gas; it will always weigh a pound: it will always attract and resist other matter, by the full virtue of one pound weight; — and the attributes of a person, his wit and his moral energy, will exercise, under

any law or extinguishing tyranny, their proper force, — if not overtly, then covertly; if not for the law, then against it; if not wholesomely, then poisonously; with right, or by might.

The boundaries of personal influence it is impossible to fix, as persons are organs of moral or supernatural force. Under the dominion of an idea, which possesses the minds of multitudes, as civil freedom, or the religious sentiment, the powers of persons are no longer subjects of calculation. A nation of men unanimously bent on freedom, or conquest, can easily confound the arithmetic of statists, and achieve extravagant actions, out of all proportion to their means; as, the Greeks, the Saracens, the Swiss, the Americans, and the French have done.

In like manner, to every particle of property belongs its own attraction. A cent is the representative of a certain quantity of corn or other commodity. Its value is in the necessities of the animal man. It is so much warmth, so much bread, so much water, so much land. The law may do what it will with the owner of property, its just power will still attach to the cent. The law may in a mad freak say, that all shall have power except the owners of property: they shall have no vote. Nevertheless, by a higher law, the property will, year after year, write every statute that respects property. The non-proprietor will be the scribe of the proprietor. What the owners wish to do, the whole power of property will do, either through the law, or else in defiance of it. Of course, I speak of all the property, not merely of the great estates. When the rich are outvoted, as frequently happens, it is the joint treasury of the poor which exceeds their accumulations. Every man owns something, if it is only a cow or a wheelbarrow, or his arms, and so has that property to dispose of.

The same necessity which secures the rights of person and

property against the malignity or folly of the magistrate, determines the form and methods of governing, which are proper to each nation, and to its habit of thought, and nowise transferable to other states of society. In this country, we are very vain of our political institutions, which are singular in this, that they sprung, within the memory of living men, from the character and condition of the people, which they still express with sufficient fidelity, — and we ostentatiously prefer them to any other in history. They are not better, but only fitter for us. We may be wise in asserting the advantage in modern times of the democratic form, but to other states of society, in which religion consecrated the monarchical, that and not this was expedient. Democracy is better for us, because the religious sentiment of the present time accords better with it. Born democrats, we are nowise qualified to judge of monarchy, which, to our fathers living in the monarchical idea, was also relatively right. But our institutions, though in coincidence with the spirit of the age, have not any exemption from the practical defects which have discredited other forms. Every actual State is corrupt. Good men must not obey the laws too well. What satire on government can equal the severity of censure conveyed in the word *politic,* which now for ages has signified *cunning,* intimating that the State is a trick?

The same benign necessity and the same practical abuse appear in the parties into which each State divides itself, of opponents and defenders of the administration of the government. Parties are also founded on instincts, and have better guides to their own humble aims than the sagacity of their leaders. They have nothing perverse in their origin, but rudely mark some real and lasting relation. We might as wisely reprove the east wind, or the frost, as a political party, whose members, for the most part, could give no account of their position, but stand for the defence of those interests in

which they find themselves. Our quarrel with them begins when they quit this deep natural ground at the bidding of some leader, and, obeying personal considerations, throw themselves into the maintenance and defence of points, nowise belonging to their system. A party is perpetually corrupted by personality. Whilst we absolve the association from dishonesty, we cannot extend the same charity to their leaders. They reap the rewards of the docility and zeal of the masses which they direct. Ordinarily, our parties are parties of circumstance, and not of principle; as, the planting interest in conflict with the commercial; the party of capitalists, and that of operatives; parties which are identical in their moral character, and which can easily change ground with each other, in support of many of their measures. Parties of principle, as, religious sects, or the party of free-trade, of universal suffrage, of abolition of slavery, of abolition of capital punishment, degenerate into personalities, or would inspire enthusiasm. The vice of our leading parties in this country (which may be cited as a fair specimen of these societies of opinion) is, that they do not plant themselves on the deep and necessary grounds to which they are respectively entitled, but lash themselves to fury in the carrying of some local and momentary measure, nowise useful to the commonwealth. Of the two great parties, which, at this hour, almost share the nation between them, I should say, that, one has the best cause, and the other contains the best men. The philosopher, the poet, or the religious man, will, of course, wish to cast his vote with the democrat, for free-trade, for wide suffrage, for the abolition of legal cruelties in the penal code, and for facilitating in every manner the access of the young and the poor to the sources of wealth and power. But he can rarely accept the persons whom the so-called popular party propose to him as representatives of these liberalities. They have not at heart the ends which

give to the name of democracy what hope and virtue are in it. The spirit of our American radicalism is destructive and aimless: it is not loving; it has no ulterior and divine ends; but is destructive only out of hatred and selfishness. On the other side, the conservative party, composed of the most moderate, able, and cultivated part of the population, is timid, and merely defensive of property. It vindicates no right, it aspires to no real good, it brands no crime, it proposes no generous policy, it does not build, nor write, nor cherish the arts, nor foster religion, nor establish schools, nor encourage science, nor emancipate the slave, nor befriend the poor, or the Indian, or the immigrant. From neither party, when in power, has the world any benefit to expect in science, art, or humanity, at all commensurate with the resources of the nation.

I do not for these defects despair of our republic. We are not at the mercy of any waves of chance. In the strife of ferocious parties, human nature always finds itself cherished, as the children of the convicts at Botany Bay are found to have as healthy a moral sentiment as other children. Citizens of feudal states are alarmed at our democratic institutions lapsing into anarchy; and the older and more cautious among ourselves are learning from Europeans to look with some terror at our turbulent freedom. It is said, that in our license of construing the Constitution, and in the despotism of public opinion, we have no anchor; and one foreign observer thinks he has found the safeguard in the sanctity of Marriage among us; and another thinks he has found it in our Calvinism. Fisher Ames expressed the popular security more wisely, when he compared a monarchy and a republic, saying, " that a monarchy is a merchantman, which sails well, but will sometimes strike on a rock, and go to the bottom; whilst a republic is a raft, which would never sink, but then your feet are always in water." No forms

can have any dangerous importance, whilst we are befriended by the laws of things. It makes no difference how many tons weight of atmosphere presses on our heads, so long as the same pressure resists it within the lungs. Augment the mass a thousandfold, it cannot begin to crush us, as long as reaction is equal to action. The fact of two poles, of two forces, centripetal and centrifugal, is universal, and each force by its own activity develops the other. Wild liberty develops iron conscience. Want of liberty, by strengthening law and decorum, stupefies conscience. "Lynch-law" prevails only where there is greater hardihood and self-subsistency in the leaders. A mob cannot be a permanency: everybody's interest requires that it should not exist, and only justice satisfies all.

We must trust infinitely to the beneficent necessity which shines through all laws. Human nature expresses itself in them as characteristically as in statues, or songs, or railroads, and an abstract of the codes of nations would be a transcript of the common conscience. Governments have their origin in the moral identity of men. Reason for one is seen to be reason for another, and for every other. There is a middle measure which satisfies all parties, be they never so many, or so resolute for their own. Every man finds a sanction for his simplest claims and deeds in decisions of his own mind, which he calls Truth and Holiness. In these decisions all the citizens find a perfect agreement, and only in these; not in what is good to eat, good to wear, good use of time, or what amount of land, or of public aid, each is entitled to claim. This truth and justice men presently endeavor to make application of, to the measuring of land, the apportionment of service, the protection of life and property. Their first endeavors, no doubt, are very awkward. Yet absolute right is the first governor; or, every government is an impure theocracy. The idea, after which each

community is aiming to make and mend its law, is, the will of the wise man. The wise man, it cannot find in nature, and it makes awkward but earnest efforts to secure his government by contrivance; as, by causing the entire people to give their voices on every measure; or, by a double choice to get the representation of the whole; or, by a selection of the best citizens; or, to secure the advantages of efficiency and internal peace, by confiding the government to one, who may himself select his agents. All forms of government symbolize an immortal government, common to all dynasties and independent of numbers, perfect where two men exist, perfect where there is only one man.

Every man's nature is a sufficient advertisement to him of the character of his fellows. My right and my wrong, is their right and their wrong. Whilst I do what is fit for me, and abstain from what is unfit, my neighbor and I shall often agree in our means, and work together for a time to one end. But whenever I find my dominion over myself not sufficient for me, and undertake the direction of him also, I overstep the truth, and come into false relations to him. I may have so much more skill or strength than he, that he cannot express adequately his sense of wrong, but it is a lie, and hurts like a lie both him and me. Love and nature cannot maintain the assumption: it must be executed by a practical lie, namely, by force. This undertaking for another, is the blunder which stands in colossal ugliness in the governments of the world. It is the same thing in numbers, as in a pair, only not quite so intelligible. I can see well enough a great difference between my setting myself down to a self-control, and my going to make somebody else act after my views: but when a quarter of the human race assume to tell me what I must do, I may be too much disturbed by the circumstances to see so clearly the absurdity of their command. Therefore, all public ends look vague and quixotic

beside private ones. For, any laws but those which men make for themselves, are laughable. If I put myself in place of my child, and we stand in one thought, and see that things are thus or thus, that perception is law for him and me. We are both there, both act. But if, without carrying him into the thought, I look over into his plot, and, guessing how it is with him, ordain this or that, he will never obey me. This is the history of governments, — one man does something which is to bind another. A man who cannot be acquainted with me, taxes me; looking from afar at me, ordains that a part of my labor shall go to this or that whimsical end, not as I, but as he happens to fancy. Behold the consequence. Of all debts, men are least willing to pay the taxes. What a satire is this on government! Everywhere they think they get their money's worth, except for these.

Hence, the less government we have, the better, — the fewer laws, and the less confided power. The antidote to this abuse of formal Government, is, the influence of private character, the growth of the Individual; the appearance of the principal to supersede the proxy; the appearance of the wise man, of whom the existing government is, it must be owned, but a shabby imitation. That which all things tend to educe, which freedom, cultivation, intercourse, revolutions, go to form and deliver, is character; that is the end of nature, to reach unto this coronation of her king. To educate the wise man, the State exists; and with the appearance of the wise man, the State expires. The appearance of character makes the State unnecessary. The wise man is the State. He needs no army, fort, or navy, — he loves men too well; no bribe, or feast, or palace, to draw friends to him; no vantage ground, no favorable circumstance. He needs no library, for he has not done thinking; no church, for he is a prophet; no statute book, for he has the lawgiver; no money, for he is value; no road, for he is at

home where he is; no experience, for the life of the creator shoots through him, and looks from his eyes. He has no personal friends, for he who has the spell to draw the prayer and piety of all men unto him, needs not husband and educate a few, to share with him a select and poetic life. His relation to men is angelic; his memory is myrrh to them; his presence, frankincense and flowers.

We think our civilization near its meridian, but we are yet only at the cock-crowing and the morning star. In our barbarous society the influence of character is in its infancy. As a political power, as the rightful lord who is to tumble all rulers from their chairs, its presence is hardly yet suspected. Malthus and Ricardo quite omit it; the Annual Register is silent; in the Conversations' Lexicon, it is not set down; the President's Message, the Queen's Speech, have not mentioned it; and yet it is never nothing. Every thought which genius and piety throw into the world, alters the world. The gladiators in the lists of power feel, through all their frocks of force and simulation, the presence of worth. I think the very strife of trade and ambition are confession of this divinity; and successes in those fields are the poor amends, the fig-leaf with which the shamed soul attempts to hide its nakedness. I find the like unwilling homage in all quarters. It is because we know how much is due from us, that we are impatient to show some petty talent as a substitute for worth. We are haunted by a conscience of this right to grandeur of character, and are false to it. But each of us has some talent, can do somewhat useful, or graceful, or formidable, or amusing, or lucrative. That we do, as an apology to others and to ourselves, for not reaching the mark of a good and equal life. But it does not satisfy *us*, whilst we thrust it on the notice of our companions. It may throw dust in their eyes, but does not smooth our own brow, or give us the tranquillity of the strong when we walk abroad.

We do penance as we go. Our talent is a sort of expiation, and we are constrained to reflect on our splendid moment, with a certain humiliation, as somewhat too fine, and not as one act of many acts, a fair expression of our permanent energy. Most persons of ability meet in society with a kind of tacit appeal. Each seems to say, "I am not all here." Senators and presidents have climbed so high with pain enough, not because they think the place specially agreeable, but as an apology for real worth, and to vindicate their manhood in our eyes. This conspicuous chair is their compensation to themselves for being of a poor, cold, hard nature. They must do what they can. Like one class of forest animals, they have nothing but a prehensile tail: climb they must, or crawl. If a man found himself so rich-natured that he could enter into strict relations with the best persons, and make life serene around him by the dignity and sweetness of his behavior, could he afford to circumvent the favor of the caucus and the press, and covet relations so hollow and pompous, as those of a politician? Surely nobody would be a charlatan, who could afford to be sincere.

The tendencies of the times favor the idea of self-government, and leave the individual, for all code, to the rewards and penalties of his own constitution, which work with more energy than we believe, whilst we depend on artificial restraints. The movement in this direction has been very marked in modern history. Much has been blind and discreditable, but the nature of the revolution is not affected by the vices of the revolters; for this is a purely moral force. It was never adopted by any party in history, neither can be. It separates the individual from all party, and unites him, at the same time, to the race. It promises a recognition of higher rights than those of personal freedom, or the security of property. A man has a right to be employed, to be trusted, to be loved, to be revered. The power of love,

as the basis of a state, has never been tried. We must not imagine that all things are lapsing into confusion, if every tender protestant be not compelled to bear his part in certain social conventions: nor doubt that roads can be built, letters carried, and the fruit of labor secured, when the government of force is at an end. Are our methods now so excellent that all competition is hopeless? Could not a nation of friends even devise better ways? On the other hand, let not the most conservative and timid fear anything from a premature surrender of the bayonet, and the system of force. For, according to the order of nature, which is quite superior to our will, it stands thus: there will always be a government of force, where men are selfish; and when they are pure enough to abjure the code of force, they will be wise enough to see how these public ends of the post-office, of the highway, of commerce, and the exchange of property, of museums and libraries, of institutions of art and science, can be answered.

We live in a very low state of the world, and pay unwilling tribute to governments founded on force. There is not, among the most religious and instructed men of the most religious and civil nations, a reliance on the moral sentiment, and a sufficient belief in the unity of things to persuade them that society can be maintained without artificial restraints, as well as the solar system; or that the private citizen might be reasonable, and a good neighbor, without the hint of a jail or a confiscation. What is strange too, there never was in any man sufficient faith in the power of rectitude, to inspire him with the broad design of renovating the State on the principle of right and love. All those who have pretended this design, have been partial reformers, and have admitted in some manner the supremacy of the bad State. I do not call to mind a single human being who has steadily denied the authority of the laws, on the simple ground of his own

moral nature. Such designs, full of genius and full of fate as they are, are not entertained except avowedly as air-pictures. If the individual who exhibits them, dare to think them practicable, he disgusts scholars and churchmen; and men of talent, and women of superior sentiments, cannot hide their contempt. Not the less does nature continue to fill the heart of youth with suggestions of this enthusiasm, and there are now men, — if indeed I can speak in the plural number, — more exactly, I will say, I have just been conversing with one man, to whom no weight of adverse experience will make it for a moment appear impossible, that thousands of human beings might exercise towards each other the grandest and simplest sentiments, as well as a knot of friends, or a pair of lovers.

A WINTER WALK

HENRY D. THOREAU

The essay of nature has found its most ardent exponents in America, and no writer represents it more appropriately than Thoreau whom Emerson has called "the bachelor of thought and nature," indicating by the phrase Thoreau's indifference to the usual interests of men in civilized society by comparison with his passionate absorption in woods and rivers, in the animate and inanimate forms which fill the virgin forest, and even in man, if he is sufficiently primitive and unspoiled. Thoreau was himself endowed with senses and instincts as acute as those of a North American Indian. He devoted most of his time to exploring the country and acquired the minutest knowledge of its changing appearances. It was a knowledge informed by love of each particular object, and so his descriptions, with all their preciseness and reality, are steeped in a sentiment which brings them to the border-land of poetry. (*A Winter Walk* appeared in *The Dial,* October, 1843, and was reprinted in *Excursions,* 1863.)

A WINTER WALK

THE wind has gently murmured through the blinds, or puffed with feathery softness against the windows, and occasionally sighed like a summer zephyr lifting the leaves along, the livelong night. The meadow-mouse has slept in his snug gallery in the sod, the owl has sat in a hollow tree in the depth of the swamp, the rabbit, the squirrel, and the fox have all been housed. The watch-dog has lain quiet on the hearth, and the cattle have stood silent in their stalls. The earth itself has slept, as it were its first, not its last sleep, save when some street-sign or wood-house door has faintly creaked upon its hinge, cheering forlorn nature at her midnight work, — the only sound awake twixt Venus and Mars, — advertising us of a remote inward warmth, a divine cheer and fellowship, where gods are met together, but where it is very bleak for men to stand. But while the earth has slumbered, all the air has been alive with feathery flakes descending, as if some northern Ceres reigned, showering her silvery grain over all the fields.

We sleep, and at length awake to the still reality of a winter morning. The snow lies warm as cotton or down upon the window-sill; the broadened sash and frosted panes admit a dim and private light, which enhances the snug cheer within. The stillness of the morning is impressive. The floor creaks under our feet as we move toward the window to look abroad through some clear space over the fields. We see the roofs stand under their snow burden. From the eaves and fences hang stalactites of snow, and in the yard stand stalagmites covering some concealed core. The trees and

shrubs rear white arms to the sky on every side; and where were walls and fences, we see fantastic forms stretching in frolic gambols across the dusky landscape, as if nature had strewn her fresh designs over the fields by night as models for man's art.

Silently we unlatch the door, letting the drift fall in, and step abroad to face the cutting air. Already the stars have lost some of their sparkle, and a dull, leaden mist skirts the horizon. A lurid brazen light in the east proclaims the approach of day, while the western landscape is dim and spectral still, and clothed in a sombre Tartarian light, like the shadowy realm. They are Infernal sounds only that you hear, — the crowing of cocks, the barking of dogs, the chopping of wood, the lowing of kine, all seem to come from Pluto's barn-yard and beyond the Styx; — not for any melancholy they suggest, but their twilight bustle is too solemn and mysterious for earth. The recent tracks of the fox or otter, in the yard, remind us that each hour of the night is crowded with events, and the primeval nature is still working and making tracks in the snow. Opening the gate, we tread briskly along the lone country road, crunching the dry and crisped snow under our feet, or aroused by the sharp clear creak of the wood-sled, just starting for the distant market, from the early farmer's door, where it has lain the summer long, dreaming amid the chips and stubble; while far through the drifts and powdered windows we see the farmer's early candle, like a paled star, emitting a lonely beam, as if some severe virtue were at its matins there. And one by one the smokes begin to ascend from the chimneys amidst the trees and snows.

> The sluggish smoke curls up from some deep dell,
> The stiffened air exploring in the dawn,
> And making slow acquaintance with the day;
> Delaying now upon its heavenward course,

In wreathed loiterings dallying with itself,
With as uncertain purpose and slow deed,
As its half-awakened master by the hearth,
Whose mind still slumbering and sluggish thoughts
Have not yet swept into the onward current
Of the new day; — and now it streams afar,
The while the chopper goes with step direct,
And mind intent to swing the early axe.
First in the dusky dawn he sends abroad
His early scout, his emissary, smoke,
The earliest, latest pilgrim from the roof,
To feel the frosty air, inform the day;
And while he crouches still beside the hearth,
Nor musters courage to unbar the door,
It has gone down the glen with the light wind,
And o'er the plain unfurled its venturous wreath,
Draped the tree-tops, loitered upon the hill,
And warmed the pinions of the early bird;
And now, perchance, high in the crispy air,
Has caught sight of the day o'er the earth's edge,
And greets its master's eye at his low door,
As some refulgent cloud in the upper sky.

We hear the sound of wood-chopping at the farmers' doors, far over the frozen earth, the baying of the house-dog, and the distant clarion of the cock. Though the thin and frosty air conveys only the finer particles of sound to our ears, with short and sweet vibrations, as the waves subside soonest on the purest and lightest liquids, in which gross substances sink to the bottom. They come clear and bell-like, and from a greater distance in the horizon, as if there were fewer impediments than in summer to make them faint and ragged. The ground is sonorous, like seasoned wood, and even the ordinary rural sounds are melodious, and the jingling of the ice on the trees is sweet and liquid. There is the least possible moisture in the atmosphere, all being dried up, or

congealed, and it is of such extreme tenuity and elasticity, that it becomes a source of delight. The withdrawn and tense sky seems groined like the aisles of a cathedral, and the polished air sparkles as if there were crystals of ice floating in it. As they who have resided in Greenland tell us, that, when it freezes, " the sea smokes like burning turf-land, and a fog or mist arises, called frost-smoke," which " cutting smoke frequently raises blisters on the face and hands, and is very pernicious to the health." But this pure stinging cold is an elixir to the lungs, and not so much a frozen mist, as a crystallized midsummer haze, refined and purified by cold.

The sun at length rises through the distant woods, as if with the faint clashing swinging sound of cymbals, melting the air with his beams, and with such rapid steps the morning travels, that already his rays are gilding the distant western mountains. Meantime we step hastily along through the powdery snow, warmed by an inward heat, enjoying an Indian summer still, in the increased glow of thought and feeling. Probably if our lives were more conformed to nature, we should not need to defend ourselves against her heats and colds, but find her our constant nurse and friend, as do plants and quadrupeds. If our bodies were fed with pure and simple elements, and not with a stimulating and heating diet, they would afford no more pasture for cold than a leafless twig, but thrive like the trees, which find even winter genial to their expansion.

The wonderful purity of nature at this season is a most pleasing fact. Every decayed stump and moss-grown stone and rail, and the dead leaves of autumn, are concealed by a clean napkin of snow. In the bare fields and tinkling woods, see what virtue survives. In the coldest and bleakest places, the warmest charities still maintain a foothold. A cold and searching wind drives away all contagion, and nothing can withstand it but what has a virtue in it; and accordingly,

whatever we meet with in cold and bleak places, as the tops of mountains, we respect for a sort of sturdy innocence, a Puritan toughness. All things beside seem to be called in for shelter, and what stays out must be part of the original frame of the universe, and of such valor as God himself. It is invigorating to breathe the cleansed air. Its greater fineness and purity are visible to the eye, and we would fain stay out long and late, that the gales may sigh through us, too, as through the leafless trees, and fit us for the winter: — as if we hoped so to borrow some pure and steadfast virtue, which will stead us in all seasons.

There is a slumbering subterranean fire in nature which never goes out, and which no cold can chill. It finally melts the great snow, and in January or July is only buried under a thicker or thinner covering. In the coldest days it flows somewhere, and the snow melts around every tree. This field of winter rye, which sprouted late in the fall, and now speedily dissolves the snow, is where the fire is very thinly covered. We feel warmed by it. In the winter, warmth stands for all virtue, and we resort in thought to a trickling rill, with its bare stones shining in the sun, and to warm springs in the woods, with as much eagerness as rabbits and robins. The steam which rises from swamps and pools, is as dear and domestic as that of our own kettle. What fire could ever equal the sunshine of a winter's day, when the meadow mice come out by the wallsides, and the chickadee lisps in the defiles of the wood? The warmth comes directly from the sun, and is not radiated from the earth, as in summer; and when we feel his beams on our backs as we are treading some snowy dell, we are grateful as for a special kindness, and bless the sun which has followed us into that by-place.

This subterranean fire has its altar in each man's breast, for in the coldest day, and on the bleakest hill, the traveller

cherishes a warmer fire within the folds of his cloak than is kindled on any hearth. A healthy man, indeed, is the complement of the seasons, and in winter, summer is in his heart. There is the south. Thither have all birds and insects migrated, and around the warm springs in his breast are gathered the robin and the lark.

At length, having reached the edge of the woods, and shut out the gadding town, we enter into their covert as we go under the roof of a cottage, and cross its threshold, all ceiled and banked up with snow. They are glad and warm still, and as genial and cheery in winter as in summer. As we stand in the midst of the pines, in the flickering and checkered light which straggles but little way into their maze, we wonder if the towns have ever heard their simple story. It seems to us that no traveller has ever explored them, and notwithstanding the wonders which science is elsewhere revealing every day, who would not like to hear their annals? Our humble villages in the plain are their contribution. We borrow from the forest the boards which shelter, and the sticks which warm us. How important is their evergreen to the winter, that portion of the summer which does not fade, the permanent year, the unwithered grass. Thus simply, and with little expense of altitude, is the surface of the earth diversified. What would human life be without forests, those natural cities? From the tops of mountains they appear like smooth shaven lawns, yet whither shall we walk but in this taller grass?

In this glade covered with bushes of a year's growth, see how the silvery dust lies on every seared leaf and twig, deposited in such infinite and luxurious forms as by their very variety atone for the absence of color. Observe the tiny tracks of mice around every stem, and the triangular tracks of the rabbit. A pure elastic heaven hangs over all, as if the impurities of the summer sky, refined and shrunk by the

chaste winter's cold, had been winnowed from the heavens upon the earth.

Nature confounds her summer distinctions at this season. The heavens seem to be nearer the earth. The elements are less reserved and distinct. Water turns to ice, rain to snow. The day is but a Scandinavian night. The winter is an arctic summer.

How much more living is the life that is in nature, the furred life which still survives the stinging nights, and, from amidst fields and woods covered with frost and snow, sees the sun rise.

"The foodless wilds
Pour forth their brown inhabitants."

The gray squirrel and rabbit are brisk and playful in the remote glens, even on the morning of the cold Friday. Here is our Lapland and Labrador, and for our Esquimaux and Knistenaux, Dog-ribbed Indians, Novazemblaites, and Spitzbergeners, are there not the ice-cutter and wood-chopper, the fox, musk-rat, and mink?

Still, in the midst of the arctic day, we may trace the summer to its retreats, and sympathize with some contemporary life. Stretched over the brooks, in the midst of the frost-bound meadows, we may observe the submarine cottages of the caddice-worms, the larvæ of the Plicipennes. Their small cylindrical cases built around themselves, composed of flags, sticks, grass, and withered leaves, shells, and pebbles, in form and color like the wrecks which strew the bottom, — now drifting along over the pebbly bottom, now whirling in tiny eddies and dashing down steep falls, or sweeping rapidly with the current, or else swaying to and fro at the end of some grass-blade or root. Anon they will leave their sunken habitations, and crawling up the stems of plants, or to the surface, like gnats, as perfect insects henceforth, flut-

ter over the surface of the water, or sacrifice their short lives in the flame of our candles at evening. Down yonder little glen the shrubs are drooping under their burden, and the red alder-berries contrast with the white ground. Here are the marks of a myriad feet which have already been abroad. The sun rises as proudly over such a glen, as over the valley of the Seine or the Tiber, and it seems the residence of a pure and self-subsistent valor, such as they never witnessed; which never knew defeat nor fear. Here reign the simplicity and purity of a primitive age, and a health and hope far remote from towns and cities. Standing quite alone, far in the forest, while the wind is shaking down snow from the trees, and leaving the only human tracks behind us, we find our reflections of a richer variety than the life of cities. The chicadee and nuthatch are more inspiring society than statesmen and philosophers, and we shall return to these last, as to more vulgar companions. In this lonely glen, with its brook draining the slopes, its creased ice and crystals of all hues, where the spruces and hemlocks stand up on either side, and the rush and sere wild oats in the rivulet itself, our lives are more serene and worthy to contemplate.

As the day advances, the heat of the sun is reflected by the hill-sides, and we hear a faint but sweet music, where flows the rill released from its fetters, and the icicles are melting on the trees; and the nuthatch and partridge are heard and seen. The south wind melts the snow at noon, and the bare ground appears with its withered grass and leaves, and we are invigorated by the perfume which exhales from it, as by the scent of strong meats.

Let us go into this deserted woodman's hut, and see how he has passed the long winter nights and the short and stormy days. For here man has lived under this south hill-side, and it seems a civilized and public spot. We have such associa-

tions as when the traveller stands by the ruins of Palmyra or Hecatompolis. Singing birds and flowers perchance have begun to appear here, for flowers as well as weeds follow in the footsteps of man. These hemlocks whispered over his head, these hickory logs were his fuel, and these pitch-pine roots kindled his fire; yonder fuming rill in the hollow, whose thin and airy vapor still ascends as busily as ever, though he is far off now, was his well. These hemlock boughs, and the straw upon this raised platform, were his bed, and this broken dish held his drink. But he has not been here this season, for the phœbes built their nest upon this shelf last summer. I find some embers left, as if he had but just gone out, where he baked his pot of beans; and while at evening he smoked his pipe, whose stemless bowl lies in the ashes, chatted with his only companion, if perchance he had any, about the depth of the snow on the morrow, already falling fast and thick without, or disputed whether the last sound was the screech of an owl, or the creak of a bough, or imagination only; and through this broad chimney throat, in the late winter evening, ere he stretched himself upon the straw, he looked up to learn the progress of the storm, and, seeing the bright stars of Cassiopeia's chair shining brightly down upon him, fell contentedly asleep.

See how many traces from which we may learn the chopper's history. From this stump we may guess the sharpness of his axe, and, from the slope of the stroke, on which side he stood, and whether he cut down the tree without going round it or changing hands; and, from the flexure of the splinters, we may know which way it fell. This one chip contains inscribed on it the whole history of the woodchopper and of the world. On this scrap of paper, which held his sugar or salt, perchance, or was the wadding of his gun, sitting on a log in the forest, with what interest we read the

tattle of cities, of those larger huts, empty and to let, like this, in High Streets and Broadways. The eaves are dripping on the south side of this simple roof, while the titmouse lisps in the pine, and the genial warmth of the sun around the door is somewhat kind and human.

After two seasons, this rude dwelling does not deform the scene. Already the birds resort to it, to build their nests, and you may track to its door the feet of many quadrupeds. Thus, for a long time, nature overlooks the encroachment and profanity of man. The wood still cheerfully and unsuspiciously echoes the strokes of the axe that fells it, and while they are few and seldom, they enhance its wildness, and all the elements strive to naturalize the sound.

Now our path begins to ascend gradually to the top of this high hill, from whose precipitous south side we can look over the broad country, of forest and field and river, to the distant snowy mountains. See yonder thin column of smoke curling up through the woods from some invisible farmhouse; the standard raised over some rural homestead. There must be a warmer and more genial spot there below, as where we detect the vapor from a spring forming a cloud above the trees. What fine relations are established between the traveller who discovers this airy column from some eminence in the forest, and him who sits below. Up goes the smoke as silently and naturally as the vapor exhales from the leaves, and as busy disposing itself in wreaths as the housewife on the hearth below. It is a hieroglyphic of man's life, and suggests more intimate and important things than the boiling of a pot. Where its fine column rises above the forest, like an ensign, some human life has planted itself, — and such is the beginning of Rome, the establishment of the arts, and the foundation of empires, whether on the prairies of America, or the steppes of Asia.

And now we descend again to the brink of this woodland

lake, which lies in a hollow of the hills, as if it were their expressed juice, and that of the leaves, which are annually steeped in it. Without an outlet or inlet to the eye, it has still its history, in the lapse of its waves, in the rounded pebbles on its shore, and in the pines which grow down to its brink. It has not been idle, though sedentary, but, like Abu Musa, teaches that "sitting still at home is the heavenly way; the going out is the way of the world." Yet in its evaporation it travels as far as any. In summer it is the earth's liquid eye; a mirror in the breast of nature. The sins of the wood are washed out in it. See how the woods form an amphitheatre about it, and it is an arena for all the genialness of nature. All trees direct the traveller to its brink, all paths seek it out, birds fly to it, quadrupeds flee to it, and the very ground inclines toward it. It is nature's saloon, where she has sat down to her toilet. Consider her silent economy and tidiness; how the sun comes with his evaporation to sweep the dust from its surface each morning, and a fresh surface is constantly welling up; and annually, after whatever impurities have accumulated herein, its liquid transparency appears again in the spring. In summer a hushed music seems to sweep across its surface. But now a plain sheet of snow conceals it from our eyes, except where the wind has swept the ice bare, and the sere leaves are gliding from side to side, tacking and veering on their tiny voyages. Here is one just keeled up against a pebble on shore, a dry beech-leaf, rocking still, as if it would start again. A skilful engineer, methinks, might project its course since it fell from the parent stem. Here are all the elements for such a calculation. Its present position, the direction of the wind, the level of the pond, and how much more is given. In its scarred edges and veins is its log rolled up.

We fancy ourselves in the interior of a larger house. The surface of the pond is our deal table or sanded floor, and the

woods rise abruptly from its edge, like the walls of a cottage. The lines set to catch pickerel through the ice look like a larger culinary preparation, and the men stand about on the white ground like pieces of forest furniture. The actions of these men, at the distance of half a mile over the ice and snow, impress us as when we read the exploits of Alexander in history. They seem not unworthy of the scenery, and as momentous as the conquest of kingdoms.

Again we have wandered through the arches of the wood, until from its skirts we hear the booming of ice from yonder bay of the river, as if it were moved by some other and subtler tide than oceans know. To me it has a strange sound of home, thrilling as the voice of one's distant and noble kindred. A mild summer sun shines over forest and lake, and though there is but one green leaf for many rods, yet nature enjoys a serene health. Every sound is fraught with the same mysterious assurance of health, as well now the creaking of the boughs in January, as the soft sough of the wind in July.

When Winter fringes every bough
  With his fantastic wreath,
And puts the seal of silence now
  Upon the leaves beneath;

When every stream in its pent-house
  Goes gurgling on its way,
And in his gallery the mouse
  Nibbleth the meadow hay;

Methinks the summer still is nigh,
  And lurketh underneath,
As that same meadow-mouse doth lie
  Snug in that last year's heath.

And if perchance the chickadee
  Lisp a faint note anon,
The snow is summer's canopy,
  Which she herself put on.

Fair blossoms deck the cheerful trees,
  And dazzling fruits depend,
The north wind sighs a summer breeze,
  The nipping frosts to fend,

Bringing glad tidings unto me,
  The while I stand all ear,
Of a serene eternity,
  Which need not winter fear.

Out on the silent pond straightway
  The restless ice doth crack,
And pond sprites merry gambols play
  Amid the deafening rack.

Eager I hasten to the vale,
  As if I heard brave news,
How nature held high festival,
  Which it were hard to lose.

I gambol with my neighbor ice,
  And sympathizing quake,
As each new crack darts in a trice
  Across the gladsome lake.

One with the cricket in the ground,
  And fagot on the hearth,
Resounds the rare domestic sound
  Along the forest path.

Before night we will take a journey on skates along the course of this meandering river, as full of novelty to one

who sits by the cottage fire all the winter's day, as if it were over the polar ice, with Captain Parry or Franklin; following the winding of the stream, now flowing amid hills, now spreading out into fair meadows, and forming a myriad coves and bays where the pine and hemlock overarch. The river flows in the rear of the towns, and we see all things from a new and wilder side. The fields and gardens come down to it with a frankness, and freedom from pretension, which they do not wear on the highway. It is the outside and edge of the earth. Our eyes are not offended by violent contrasts. The last rail of the farmer's fence is some swaying willow bough, which still preserves its freshness, and here at length all fences stop, and we no longer cross any road. We may go far up within the country now by the most retired and level road, never climbing a hill, but by broad levels ascending to the upland meadows. It is a beautiful illustration of the law of obedience, the flow of a river; the path for a sick man, a highway down which an acorn cup may float secure with its freight. Its slight occasional falls, whose precipices would not diversify the landscape, are celebrated by mist and spray, and attract the traveller from far and near. From the remote interior, its current conducts him by broad and easy steps, or by one gentle inclined plane, to the sea. Thus by an early and constant yielding to the inequalities of the ground, it secures itself the easiest passage.

No domain of nature is quite closed to man at all times, and now we draw near to the empire of the fishes. Our feet glide swiftly over unfathomed depths, where in summer our line tempted the pout and perch, and where the stately pickerel lurked in the long corridors formed by the bulrushes. The deep, impenetrable marsh, where the heron waded, and bittern squatted, is made pervious to our swift shoes, as if a thousand railroads had been made into it. With one

impulse we are carried to the cabin of the musk-rat, that earliest settler, and see him dart away under the transparent ice, like a furred fish, to his hole in the bank; and we glide rapidly over meadows where lately "the mower whet his scythe," through beds of frozen cranberries mixed with meadow grass. We skate near to where the blackbird, the pewee, and the kingbird hung their nests over the water, and the hornets builded from the maple in the swamp. How many gay warblers following the sun, have radiated from this nest of silver-birch and thistledown. On the swamp's outer edge was hung the supermarine village, where no foot penetrated. In this hollow tree the wood-duck reared her brood, and slid away each day to forage in yonder fen.

In winter, nature is a cabinet of curiosities, full of dried specimens, in their natural order and position. The meadows and forests are a *hortus siccus*. The leaves and grasses stand perfectly pressed by the air without screw or gum, and the birds' nests are not hung on an artificial twig, but where they builded them. We go about dryshod to inspect the summer's work in the rank swamp, and see what a growth have got the alders, the willows, and the maples; testifying to how many warm suns, and fertilizing dews and showers. See what strides their boughs took in the luxuriant summer, — and anon these dormant buds will carry them onward and upward another span into the heavens.

Occasionally we wade through fields of snow, under whose depths the river is lost for many rods, to appear again to the right or left, where we least expected; still holding on its way underneath, with a faint, stertorous, rumbling sound, as if, like the bear and marmot, it too had hibernated, and we had followed its faint summer-trail to where it earthed itself in snow and ice. At first we should have thought that rivers would be empty and dry in midwinter, or else frozen solid till the spring thawed them; but their volume is not

diminished even, for only a superficial cold bridges their surface. The thousand springs which feed the lakes and streams are flowing still. The issues of a few surface springs only are closed, and they go to swell the deep reservoirs. Nature's wells are below the frost. The summer brooks are not filled with snow-water, nor does the mower quench his thirst with that alone. The streams are swollen when the snow melts in the spring, because nature's work has been delayed, the water being turned into ice and snow, whose particles are less smooth and round, and do not find their level so soon.

Far over the ice, between the hemlock woods and snow-clad hills, stands the pickerel fisher, his lines set in some retired cove, like a Finlander, with his arms thrust into the pouches of his dreadnought; with dull, snowy, fishy thoughts, himself a finless fish, separated a few inches from his race; dumb, erect, and made to be enveloped in clouds and snows, like the pines on shore. In these wild scenes, men stand about in the scenery, or move deliberately and heavily, having sacrificed the sprightliness and vivacity of towns to the dumb sobriety of nature. He does not make the scenery less wild, more than the jays and musk-rats, but stands there as a part of it, as the natives are represented in the voyages of early navigators, at Nootka Sound, and on the Northwest coast, with their furs about them, before they were tempted to loquacity by a scrap of iron. He belongs to the natural family of man, and is planted deeper in nature and has more root than the inhabitants of towns. Go to him, ask what luck, and you will learn that he too is a worshipper of the unseen. Hear with what sincere deference and waving gesture in his tone, he speaks of the lake pickerel, which he has never seen, his primitive and ideal race of pickerel. He is connected with the shore still, as by a fish-line, and yet remembers the season when he took fish through the

ice on the pond, while the peas were up in his garden at home.

But now, while we have loitered, the clouds have gathered again, and a few straggling snow-flakes are beginning to descend. Faster and faster they fall, shutting out the distant objects from sight. The snow falls on every wood and field, and no crevice is forgotten; by the river and the pond, on the hill and in the valley. Quadrupeds are confined to their coverts, and the birds sit upon their perches this peaceful hour. There is not so much sound as in fair weather, but silently and gradually every slope, and the gray walls and fences, and the polished ice, and the sere leaves, which were not buried before, are concealed, and the tracks of men and beasts are lost. With so little effort does nature reassert her rule and blot out the traces of men. Hear how Homer has described the same. "The snow-flakes fall thick and fast on a winter's day. The winds are lulled, and the snow falls incessant, covering the tops of the mountains, and the hills, and the plains where the lotus-tree grows, and the cultivated fields, and they are falling by the inlets and shores of the foaming sea, but are silently dissolved by the waves." The snow levels all things, and infolds them deeper in the bosom of nature, as, in the slow summer, vegetation creeps up to the entablature of the temple, and the turrets of the castle, and helps her to prevail over art.

The surly night-wind rustles through the wood, and warns us to retrace our steps, while the sun goes down behind the thickening storm, and birds seek their roosts, and cattle their stalls.

> "Drooping the lab'rer ox
> Stands covered o'er with snow, and *now* demands
> The fruit of all his toil."

Though winter is represented in the almanac as an old man, facing the wind and sleet, and drawing his cloak about

him, we rather think of him as a merry wood-chopper, and warm-blooded youth, as blithe as summer. The unexplored grandeur of the storm keeps up the spirits of the traveller. It does not trifle with us, but has a sweet earnestness. In winter we lead a more inward life. Our hearts are warm and cheery, like cottages under drifts, whose windows and doors are half concealed, but from whose chimney the smoke cheerfully ascends. The imprisoning drifts increase the sense of comfort which the house affords, and in the coldest days we are content to sit over the hearth and see the sky through the chimney top, enjoying the quiet and serene life that may be had in a warm corner by the chimney side, or feeling our pulse by listening to the low of cattle in the street, or the sound of the flail in distant barns all the long afternoon. No doubt a skilful physician could determine our health by observing how these simple and natural sounds affect us. We enjoy now, not an oriental, but a boreal leisure, around warm stoves and fireplaces, and watch the shadow of motes in the sunbeams.

Sometimes our fate grows too homely and familiarly serious ever to be cruel. Consider how for three months the human destiny is wrapped in furs. The good Hebrew Revelation takes no cognizance of all this cheerful snow. Is there no religion for the temperate and frigid zones? We know of no scripture which records the pure benignity of the gods on a New England winter night. Their praises have never been sung, only their wrath deprecated. The best scripture, after all, records but a meagre faith. Its saints live reserved and austere. Let a brave devout man spend the year in the woods of Maine or Labrador, and see if the Hebrew Scriptures speak adequately to his condition and experience, from the setting in of winter to the breaking up of the ice.

Now commences the long winter evening around the farmer's hearth, when the thoughts of the indwellers travel far

abroad, and men are by nature and necessity charitable and liberal to all creatures. Now is the happy resistance to cold, when the farmer reaps his reward, and thinks of his preparedness for winter, and, through the glittering panes, sees with equanimity "the mansion of the northern bear," for now the storm is over,

> "The full ethereal round,
> Infinite worlds disclosing to the view,
> Shines out intensely keen; and all one cope
> Of starry glitter glows from pole to pole."

KNOWLEDGE VIEWED IN RELATION TO LEARNING

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

In the characteristic virtues of the expository essay no English writer surpasses Newman. He exercises to perfection the art of luminous definition. He carefully prepares the ground, analyzes his thought into its simplest elements, develops each part with all the fullness that it will bear, marks distinctly the transition from one step to the next, further facilitates understanding by summarizing the larger divisions of his subject, and brings the whole to a pointed and effortless conclusion. Indeed, from one point of view it might be objected to such a style that it carries the reader along too easily and smoothly, giving him insufficient opportunity for that exertion by which his mind cooperates with that of the writer in obtaining the meaning. In the following essay, the central thought, that education consists in the enlargement of the mind or the training of the judgment, is far from novel. It has been expressed so often, both before and after Newman, that it may be called commonplace. But Newman puts it with such utter clarity and persuasiveness of detail that it becomes the final and classical expression of this particular truth. Especially since his virtues are more than structural. The purity and propriety of his diction, the graceful but unartificial cadence of his clauses, the harmonious progression of his sentences create that effect of quiet, dignified, and unobtrusive beauty which we find in some of the great masters of ancient prose and is commoner in modern French than in English. (*Knowledge Viewed in Relation to Learning* was originally one of a series of *Discourses on the Scope and Nature of a University Education* which Newman delivered in Dublin in 1852 and published in the same year with the idea of persuading a Catholic audience of the importance of providing in their university the means of a liberal

education. His opening refers to the discourse immediately preceding which was entitled *Knowledge Its Own End* and to the two that follow, *Knowledge Viewed in Relation to Professional Skill* and *Knowledge Viewed in Relation to Religion.* There were nine discourses in all, and these were combined with other addresses and published in 1873 as *The Idea of a University.*)

KNOWLEDGE VIEWED IN RELATION TO LEARNING

I

IT were well if the English, like the Greek language, possessed some definite word to express, simply and generally, intellectual proficiency or perfection, such as "health," as used with reference to the animal frame, and "virtue," with reference to our moral nature. I am not able to find such a term; — talent, ability, genius, belong distinctly to the raw material, which is the subject-matter, not to that excellence which is the result of exercise and training. When we turn, indeed, to the particular kinds of intellectual perfection, words are forthcoming for our purpose, as, for instance, judgment, taste, and skill; yet even these belong, for the most part, to powers or habits bearing upon practice or upon art, and not to any perfect condition of the intellect, considered in itself. Wisdom, again, is certainly a more comprehensive word than any other, but it has a direct relation to conduct, and to human life. Knowledge, indeed, and science express purely intellectual ideas, but still not a state or quality of the intellect; for knowledge, in its ordinary sense, is but one of its circumstances, denoting a possession or a habit; and science has been appropriated to the subject-matter of the intellect, instead of belonging in English, as it ought to do, to the intellect itself. The consequence is that, on an occasion like this, many words are necessary, in order, first, to bring out and convey what surely is no difficult idea in itself, — that of the cultivation of the intellect as an end; next, in order to recommend what surely is no unreasonable object; and lastly, to describe and make

the mind realize the particular perfection in which that object consists. Every one knows practically what are the constituents of health or of virtue; and every one recognizes health and virtue as ends to be pursued; it is otherwise with intellectual excellence, and this must be my excuse, if I seem to anyone to be bestowing a good deal of labour on a preliminary matter.

In default of a recognized term, I have called the perfection or virtue of the intellect by the name of philosophy, philosophical knowledge, enlargement of mind, or illumination; terms which are not uncommonly given to it by writers of this day: but, whatever name we bestow on it, it is, I believe, as a matter of history, the business of a University to make this intellectual culture its direct scope, or to employ itself in the education of the intellect, — just as the work of a Hospital lies in healing the sick or wounded, of a Riding or Fencing school, or of a Gymnasium, in exercising the limbs, of an Almshouse, in aiding and solacing the old, of an Orphanage, in protecting innocence, of a Penitentiary, in restoring the guilty. I say, a University, taken in its bare idea, and before we view it as an instrument of the Church, has this object and this mission; it contemplates neither moral impression nor mechanical production; it professes to exercise the mind neither in art nor in duty; its function is intellectual culture; here it may leave its scholars, and it has done its work when it has done as much as this. It educates the intellect to reason well in all matters, to reach out towards truth, and to grasp it.

2

This, I said in my foregoing Discourse, was the object of a University, viewed in itself, and apart from the Catholic

Church, or from the State, or from any other power which may use it; and I illustrated this in various ways. I said that the intellect must have an excellence of its own, for there was nothing which had not its specific good; that the word "educate" would not be used of intellectual culture, as it is used, had not the intellect had an end of its own; that, had it not such an end, there would be no meaning in calling certain intellectual exercises "liberal," in contrast with "useful," as is commonly done; that the very notion of a philosophical temper implied it, for it threw us back upon research and system as ends in themselves, distinct from effects and works of any kind; that a philosophical scheme of knowledge, or system of sciences, could not, from the nature of the case, issue in any one definite art or pursuit, as its end; and that, on the other hand, the discovery and contemplation of truth, to which research and systematizing led, were surely sufficient ends, though nothing beyond them were added, and that they had ever been accounted sufficient by mankind.

Here then I take up the subject; and, having determined that the cultivation of the intellect is an end distinct and sufficient in itself, and that, so far as words go it is an enlargement or illumination, I proceed to inquire what this mental breadth, or power, or light, or philosophy consists in. A Hospital heals a broken limb or cures a fever: what does an Institution effect, which professes the health, not of the body, not of the soul, but of the intellect? What is this good, which in former times, as well as our own, has been found worth the notice, the appropriation, of the Catholic Church?

I have then to investigate, in the Discourses which follow, those qualities and characteristics of the intellect in which its cultivation issues or rather consists; and, with a view of

assisting myself in this undertaking, I shall recur to certain questions which have already been touched upon. These questions are three: viz., the relation of intellectual culture, first, to *mere* knowledge; secondly, the *professional* knowledge; and thirdly, to *religious* knowledge. In other words, are *acquirements* and *attainments* the scope of a University Education? or *expertness in particular arts* and *pursuits?* or *moral and religious proficiency?* or something besides these three? These questions I shall examine in succession, with the purpose I have mentioned; and I hope to be excused, if, in this anxious undertaking, I am led to repeat what, either in these Discourses or elsewhere, I have already put upon paper. And first, of *Mere Knowledge,* or Learning, and its connection with intellectual illumination or Philosophy.

3

I suppose the *prima facie* view which the public at large would take of a University, considering it as a place of Education, is nothing more or less than a place for acquiring a great deal of knowledge on a great many subjects. Memory is one of the first developed of the mental faculties; a boy's business when he goes to school is to learn, that is, to store up things in his memory. For some years his intellect is little more than an instrument for taking in facts, or a receptacle for storing them; he welcomes them as fast as they come to him; he lives on what is without; he has his eyes ever about him; he has a lively susceptibility of impressions; he imbibes information of every kind; and little does he make his own in a true sense of the word, living rather upon his neighbours all around him. He has opinions, religious, political, and literary, and, for a boy, is very positive in them and sure about them; but he gets them from his schoolfellows, or his masters, or his parents, as the case may

be. Such as he is in his other relations, such also is he in his school exercises; his mind is observant, sharp, ready, retentive; he is almost passive in the acquisition of knowledge. I say this in no disparagement of the idea of a clever boy. Geography, chronology, history, language, natural history, he heaps up the matter of these studies as treasures for a future day. It is the seven years of plenty with him: he gathers in by handfuls, like the Egyptians, without counting; and though, as time goes on, there is exercise for his argumentative powers in the Elements of Mathematics, and for his taste in the Poets and Orators, still, while at school, or at least, till quite the last years of his time, he acquires, and little more; and when he is leaving for the University, he is mainly the creature of foreign influences and circumstances, and made up of accidents, homogeneous or not, as the case may be. Moreover, the moral habits, which are a boy's praise, encourage and assist this result; that is, diligence, assiduity, regularity, dispatch, persevering application; for these are the direct conditions of acquisition, and naturally lead to it. Acquirements, again, are emphatically producible, and at a moment; they are a something to show, both for master and scholar; an audience, even though ignorant themselves of the subject of an examination, can comprehend when questions are answered and when they are not. Here again is a reason why mental culture is in the minds of men identified with the acquisition of knowledge.

The same notion possesses the public mind, when it passes on from the thought of a school to that of a University: and with the best of reasons so far as this, that there is no true culture without acquirements, and that philosophy presupposes knowledge. It requires a great deal of reading, or a wide range of information, to warrant us in putting forth our opinions on any serious subject; and without such learning

the most original mind may be able indeed to dazzle, to amuse, to refute, to perplex, but not to come to any useful result or any trustworthy conclusion. There are indeed persons who profess a different view of the matter, and even act upon it. Every now and then you will find a person of vigorous or fertile mind, who relies upon his own resources, despises all former authors, and gives the world, with the utmost fearlessness, his views upon religion, or history, or any other popular subject. And his works may sell for a while; he may get a name in his day; but this will be all. His readers are sure to find on the long run that his doctrines are mere theories, and not the expression of facts, that they are chaff instead of bread, and then his popularity drops as suddenly as it rose.

Knowledge then is the indispensable condition of expansion of mind, and the instrument of attaining to it; this cannot be denied; it is ever to be insisted on; I begin with it as a first principle; however, the very truth of it carries men too far, and confirms to them the notion that it is the whole of the matter. A narrow mind is thought to be that which contains little knowledge; and an enlarged mind, that which holds a great deal; and what seems to put the matter beyond dispute is, the fact of the great number of studies which are pursued in a University, by its very profession. Lectures are given on every kind of subject; examinations are held; prizes awarded. There are moral, metaphysical, physical Professors; Professors of languages, of history, of mathematics, of experimental science. Lists of questions are published, wonderful for their range and depth, variety and difficulty; treatises are written, which carry upon their very face the evidence of extensive reading or multifarious information; what then is wanting for mental culture to a person of large reading and scientific attainments? what is grasp of mind but acquirement? where shall philosophical

repose be found, but in the consciousness and enjoyment of large intellectual possessions?

And yet this notion is, I conceive, a mistake, and my present business is to show that it is one, and that the end of a Liberal Education is not mere knowledge, or knowledge considered in its *matter;* and I shall best attain my object by actually setting down some cases, which will be generally granted to be instances of the process of enlightenment or enlargement of mind, and others which are not, and thus, by the comparison, you will be able to judge for yourselves, Gentlemen, whether Knowledge, that is, acquirement, is after all the real principle of the enlargement, or whether that principle is not rather something beyond it.

4

For instance,* let a person, whose experience has hitherto been confined to the more calm and unpretending scenery of these islands, whether here or in England, go for the first time into parts where physical nature puts on her wilder and more awful forms, whether at home or abroad, as into mountainous districts; or let one, who has ever lived in a quiet village, go for the first time to a great metropolis, — then I suppose he will have a sensation which perhaps he never had before. He has a feeling not in addition or increase of former feelings, but of something different in its nature. He will perhaps be borne forward, and find for a time that he has lost his bearings. He has made a certain progress, and he has a consciousness of mental enlargement; he does not stand where he did, he has a new centre, and a range of thoughts to which he was before a stranger.

* The pages which follow are taken almost *verbatim* from the author's 14th (Oxford) University Sermon, which, at the time of writing this Discourse, he did not expect ever to reprint.

Again, the view of the heavens which the telescope opens upon us, if allowed to fill and possess the mind, may almost whirl it round and make it dizzy. It brings in a flood of ideas, and is rightly called an intellectual enlargement, whatever is meant by the term.

And so again, the sight of beasts of prey and other foreign animals, their strangeness, the originality (if I may use the term) of their forms and gestures and habits and their variety and independence of each other, throws us out of ourselves into another creation, and as if under another Creator, if I may so express the temptation which may come on the mind. We seem to have new faculties, or a new exercise for our faculties, by this addition to our knowledge; like a prisoner, who, having been accustomed to wear manacles or fetters, suddenly finds his arms and legs free.

Hence Physical Science generally, in all its departments, as bringing before us the exuberant riches and resources, yet the orderly course, of the Universe, elevates and excites the student, and at first, I may say, almost takes away his breath, while in time it exercises a tranquilizing influence upon him.

Again, the study of history is said to enlarge and enlighten the mind, and why? because, as I conceive, it gives it a power of judging passing events, and of all events, and a conscious superiority over them, which before it did not possess.

And in like manner, what is called seeing the world, entering into active life, going into society, travelling, gaining acquaintance with the various classes of the community, coming into contact with the principles and modes of thought of various parties, interests, and races, their views, aims, habits and manners, their religious creeds and forms of worship, — gaining experience how various yet how alike men are, how low-minded, how bad, how opposed, yet how confident in their opinions; all this exerts a perceptible in-

fluence upon the mind, which it is impossible to mistake, be it good or be it bad, and is popularly called its enlargement.

And then again, the first time the mind comes across the arguments and speculations of unbelievers, and feels what a novel light they cast upon what he has hitherto accounted sacred; and still more, if it gives in to them and embraces them, and throws off as so much prejudice what it has hitherto held, and, as if waking from a dream, begins to realize to its imagination that there is now no such thing as law and the transgression of law, that sin is a phantom, and punishment a bugbear, that it is free to sin, free to enjoy the world and the flesh; and still further, when it does enjoy them, and reflects that it may think and hold just what it will, that "the world is all before it where to choose," and what system to build up as its own private persuasion; when this torrent of willful thoughts rushes over and inundates it, who will deny that the fruit of the tree of knowledge, or what the mind takes for knowledge, has made it one of the gods, with a sense of expansion and elevation,—an intoxication in reality, still, so far as the subjective state of the mind goes, an illumination? Hence the fanaticism of individuals or nations, who suddenly cast off their Maker. Their eyes are opened; and, like the judgment-stricken king in the Tragedy, they see two suns, and a magic universe, out of which they look back upon their former state of faith and innocence with a sort of contempt and indignation, as if they were then but fools, and the dupes of imposture.

On the other hand, Religion has its own enlargement, and an enlargement, not of tumult, but of peace. It is often remarked of uneducated persons, who have hitherto thought little of the unseen world, that, on their turning to God, looking into themselves, regulating their hearts, reforming their conduct, and meditating on death and judgment, heaven and

hell, they seem to become, in point of intellect, different beings from what they were. Before, they took things as they came, and thought no more of one thing than another. But now every event has a meaning; they have their own estimate of whatever happens to them; they are mindful of times and seasons, and compare the present with the past; and the world, no longer dull, monotonous, unprofitable, and hopeless, is a various and complicated drama, with parts and an object, and an awful moral.

5

Now from these instances, to which many more might be added, it is plain, first, that the communication of knowledge certainly is either a condition or the means of that sense of enlargement or enlightenment, of which at this day we hear so much in certain quarters: this cannot be denied; but next, it is equally plain that such communication is not the whole of the process. The enlargement consists, not merely in the passive reception into the mind of a number of ideas hitherto unknown to it, but in the mind's energetic and simultaneous action upon and towards and among those new ideas, which are rushing in upon it. It is the action of a formative power, reducing to order and meaning the matter of our acquirements; it is a making the objects of our knowledge subjectively our own, or, to use a familiar word, it is a digestion of what we receive, into the substance of our previous state of thought; and without this no enlargement is said to follow. There is no enlargement, unless there be a comparison of ideas one with another, as they come before the mind, and a systematizing of them. We feel our minds to be growing and expanding *then*, when we not only learn, but refer what we learn to what we know already. It is not the mere addition to our knowledge that is the illumination; but the locomotion, the movement onward, of that mental

centre, to which both what we know, and what we are learning, the accumulating mass of our acquirements, gravitates. And therefore a truly great intellect, and recognized to be such by the common opinion of mankind, such as the intellect of Aristotle, or of St. Thomas, or of Newton, or of Goethe, (I purposely take instances within and without the Catholic pale, when I would speak of the intellect as such,) is one which takes a connected view of old and new, past and present, far and near, and which has an insight into the influence of all these one on another; without which there is no whole, and no centre. It possesses the knowledge, not only of things, but also of their mutual and true relations; knowledge, not merely considered as acquirement, but as philosophy.

Accordingly, when this analytical, distributive, harmonizing process is away, the mind experiences no enlargement, and is not reckoned as enlightened or comprehensive, whatever it may add to its knowledge. For instance, a great memory, as I have already said, does not make a philosopher, any more than a dictionary can be called a grammar. There are men who embrace in their minds a vast multitude of ideas, but with little sensibility about their real relations towards each other. These may be antiquarians, annalists, naturalists; they may be learned in the law; they may be versed in statistics; they are most useful in their own place; I should shrink from speaking disrespectfully of them; still there is nothing in such attainments to guarantee the absence of narrowness of mind. If they are nothing more than well-read men, or men of information, they have not what specially deserves the name of culture of mind, or fulfills the type of Liberal Education.

In like manner, we sometimes fall in with persons who have seen much of the world, and of the men who, in their day, have played a conspicuous part in it, but who generalize nothing, and have no observation, in the true sense of the

word. They abound in information in detail, curious and entertaining, about men and things; and having lived under the influence of no very clear or settled principles, religious or political, they speak of everyone and everything, only as so many phenomena, which are complete in themselves, and lead to nothing, not discussing them, or teaching any truth, or instructing the hearer, but simply talking. No one would say that these persons, well informed as they are, had attained to any great culture of intellect or to philosophy.

The case is the same still more strikingly where the persons in question are beyond dispute men of inferior powers and deficient education. Perhaps they have been much in foreign countries, and they receive, in a passive, otiose, unfruitful way, the various facts which are forced upon them there. Seafaring men, for example, range from one end of the earth to the other; but the multiplicity of external objects, which they have encountered, forms no symmetrical and consistent picture upon their imagination; they see the tapestry of human life, as it were, on the wrong side, and it tells no story. They sleep, and they rise up, and they find themselves, now in Europe, now in Asia; they see visions of great cities and wild regions; they are in the marts of commerce, or amid the islands of the South; they gaze on Pompey's Pillar, or on the Andes; and nothing which meets them carries them forward or backward, to any idea beyond itself. Nothing has a drift or relation; nothing has a history or a promise. Everything stands by itself, and comes and goes in its turn, like the shifting scenes of a show, which leave the spectator where he was. Perhaps you are near such a man on a particular occasion, and expect him to be shocked or perplexed at something which occurs; but one thing is much the same to him as another, or, if he is perplexed, it is as not knowing what to say, whether it is right to admire, or to ridicule, or to disapprove, while conscious that some expres-

sion of opinion is expected from him; for in fact he has no standard of judgment at all, and no landmarks to guide him to a conclusion. Such is mere acquisition, and, I repeat, no one would dream of calling it philosophy.

6

Instances, such as these, confirm, by the contrast, the conclusion I have already drawn from those which preceded them. That only is true enlargement of mind which is the power of viewing many things at once as one whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values, and determining their mutual dependence. This is that form of Universal Knowledge, of which I have on a former occasion spoken, set up in the individual intellect, and constitutes its perfection. Possessed of this real illumination, the mind never views any part of the extended subject-matter of Knowledge without recollecting that it is but a part, or without the associations which spring from this recollection. It makes everything in some sort lead to everything else; it would communicate the image of the whole to every separate portion, till that whole becomes in imagination like a spirit, everywhere pervading and penetrating its component parts, and giving them one definite meaning. Just as our bodily organs, when mentioned, recall their function in the body, as the word " creation " suggests the Creator, and " subjects " a sovereign, so, in the mind of the Philosopher, as we are abstractedly conceiving of him, the elements of the physical and moral world, sciences, arts, pursuits, ranks, offices, events, opinions, individualities, are all viewed as one, with correlative functions, and as gradually by successive combinations converging, one and all, to the true centre.

To have even a portion of this illuminative reason and

true philosophy is the highest state to which nature can aspire, in the way of intellect; it puts the mind above the influences of chance and necessity, above anxiety, suspense, unsettlement, and superstition, which is the lot of the many. Men whose minds are possessed with some one object, take exaggerated views of its importance, are feverish in the pursuit of it, make it the measure of things which are utterly foreign to it, and are startled and despond if it happens to fail them. They are ever in alarm or in transport. Those on the other hand who have no object or principle whatever to hold by, lose their way, every step they take. They are thrown out, and do not know what to think or say, at every fresh juncture; they have no view of persons, or occurrences, or facts, which come suddenly upon them, and they hang upon the opinion of others, for want of internal resources. But the intellect, which has been disciplined to the perfection of its powers, which knows, and thinks while it knows, which has learned to leaven the dense mass of facts and events with the elastic force of reason, such an intellect cannot be partial, cannot be exclusive, cannot be impetuous, cannot be at a loss, cannot but be patient, collected, and majestically calm, because it discerns the end in every beginning, the origin in every end, the law in every interruption, the limit in each delay; because it ever knows where it stands, and how its path lies from one point to another. It is the τετράγωνος * of the Peripatetic, and has the *nil admirari* † of the Stoic:

> Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
> Atque metus omnes, et inexorabile fatum
> Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.‡

* [Four-square, perfect as a square.]

† [To marvel at nothing.]

‡ [Happy is he who is able to understand the secrets of nature and thus triumphs over all fear and inexorable fate and the roar of the greedy Acheron.]

There are men who, when in difficulties, originate at the moment vast ideas or dazzling projects; who, under the influence of excitement, are able to cast a light, almost as if from inspiration, on a subject or course of action which comes before them; who have a sudden presence of mind equal to any emergency, rising with the occasion, and an undaunted magnanimous bearing, and an energy and keenness which is but made intense by opposition. This is genius, this is heroism; it is the exhibition of a natural gift, which no culture can teach, at which no institution can aim; here, on the contrary, we are concerned, not with mere nature, but with training and teaching. That perfection of the intellect, which is the result of education, and its *beau ideal,* to be imparted to individuals in their respective measures, is the clear, calm, accurate vision and comprehension of all things, as far as the finite mind can embrace them, each in its place, and with its own characteristics upon it. It is almost prophetic from its knowledge of history; it is almost heart-searching from its knowledge of human nature; it has almost supernatural charity from its freedom from littleness and prejudice; it has almost the repose of faith, because nothing can startle it; it has almost the beauty and harmony of heavenly contemplation, so intimate is it with the eternal order of things and the music of the spheres.

7

And now, if I may take for granted that the true and adequate end of intellectual training and of a University is not Learning or Acquirement, but rather is Thought or Reason exercised upon Knowledge, or what may be called Philosophy, I shall be in a position to explain the various mistakes which at the present day beset the subject of University Education.

I say then, if we would improve the intellect, first of all, we must ascend; we cannot gain real knowledge on a level; we must generalize, we must reduce to method, we must have a grasp of principles, and group and shape our acquisitions by means of them. It matters not whether our field of operation be wide or limited; in every case, to command it is to mount above it. Who has not felt the irritation of mind and impatience created by a deep, rich country, visited for the first time, with winding lanes, and high hedges, and green steeps, and tangled woods, and every thing smiling indeed, but in a maze? The same feeling comes upon us in a strange city, when we have no map of its streets. Hence you hear of practised travelers, when they first come into a place, mounting some high hill or church tower, by way of reconnoitering its neighbourhood. In like manner, you must be above your knowledge, not under it, or it will oppress you; and the more you have of it, the greater will be the load. The learning of a Salmasius or a Burman, unless you are its master, will be your tyrant. "Imperat aut servit"; * if you can wield it with a strong arm, it is a great weapon; otherwise,

Vis consili expers
Mole ruit sua.†

You will be overwhelmed, like Tarpeia, by the heavy wealth which you have exacted from tributary generations.

Instances abound; there are authors who are as pointless as they are inexhaustible in their literary resources. They measure knowledge by bulk, as it lies in the rude block, without symmetry, without design. How many commentators are there on the Classics, how many on Holy Scripture, from whom we rise up, wondering at the learning which has

* [It rules or it serves.]
† [Brute force without intelligence falls of its own weight.]

passed before us, and wondering why it passed! How many writers are there of Ecclesiastical History, such as Mosheim or Du Pin, who, breaking up their subject into details, destroy its life, and defraud us of the whole by their anxiety about the parts! The Sermons, again, of the English Divines in the seventeenth century, how often are they mere repertories of miscellaneous and officious learning! Of course Catholics also may read without thinking; and in their case, equally as with Protestants, it holds good, that such knowledge is unworthy of the name, knowledge which they have not thought through, and thought out. Such readers are only possessed by their knowledge, not possessed of it; nay, in matter of fact they are often even carried away by it, without any volition of their own. Recollect, the Memory can tyrannize, as well as the Imagination. Derangement, I believe, has been considered as a loss of control over the sequence of ideas. The mind, once set in motion, is henceforth deprived of the power of initiation, and becomes the victim of a train of associations, one thought suggesting another, in the way of cause and effect, as if by a mechanical process, or some physical necessity. No one, who has had experience of men of studious habits, but must recognize the existence of a parallel phenomenon in the case of those who have over-stimulated the Memory. In such persons Reason acts almost as feebly and as impotently as in the madman; once fairly started on any subject whatever, they have no power of self-control; they passively endure the succession of impulses which are evolved out of the original exciting cause; they are passed on from one idea to another and go steadily forward, plodding along one line of thought in spite of the amplest concessions of the hearer, or wandering from it in endless digression in spite of his remonstrances. Now, if, as is very certain, no one would envy the madman the glow and originality of his conceptions, why must we extol

the cultivation of that intellect, which is the prey, not indeed of barren fancies but of barren facts, of random intrusions from without, though not of morbid imaginations from within? And in thus speaking, I am not denying that a strong and ready memory is in itself a real treasure; I am not disparaging a well-stored mind, though it be nothing besides, provided it be sober, any more than I would despise a bookseller's shop: — it is of great value to others, even when not so to the owner. Nor am I banishing, far from it, the possessors of deep and multifarious learning from my ideal University; they adorn it in the eyes of men; I do but say that they constitute no type of the results at which it aims; that it is no great gain to the intellect to have enlarged the memory at the expense of faculties which are indisputably higher.

8

Nor indeed am I supposing that there is any great danger, at least in this day, of over-education; the danger is on the other side. I will tell you, Gentlemen, what has been the practical error of the last twenty years, — not to load the memory of the student with a mass of undigested knowledge, but to force upon him so much that he has rejected all. It has been the error of distracting and enfeebling the mind by an unmeaning profusion of subjects; of implying that a smattering in a dozen branches of study is not shallowness, which it really is, but enlargement, which it is not; of considering an acquaintance with the learned names of things and persons, and the possession of clever duodecimos, and attendance on eloquent lecturers, and membership with scientific institutions, and the sight of the experiments of a platform and the specimens of a museum, that all this was not dissipation of mind, but progress. All things now are to be learned at once, not first one thing, then another, not one

well, but many badly. Learning is to be without exertion, without attention, without toil; without grounding, without advance, without finishing. There is to be nothing individual in it; and this, forsooth, is the wonder of the age. What the steam engine does with matter, the printing press is to do with mind; it is to act mechanically, and the population is to be passively, almost unconsciously enlightened, by the mere multiplication and dissemination of volumes. Whether it be the school boy, or the school girl, or the youth at college, or the mechanic in the town, or the politician in the senate, all have been the victims in one way or other of this most preposterous and pernicious of delusions. Wise men have lifted up their voices in vain; and at length, lest their own institutions should be outshone and should disappear in the folly of the hour, they have been obliged, as far as they could with a good conscience, to humor a spirit which they could not withstand, and make temporizing concessions at which they could not but inwardly smile.

It must not be supposed that, because I so speak, therefore I have some sort of fear of the education of the people: on the contrary, the more education they have, the better, so that it is really education. Nor am I an enemy to the cheap publication of scientific and literary works, which is now in vogue: on the contrary, I consider it a great advantage, convenience, and gain; that is, to those to whom education has given a capacity for using them. Further, I consider such innocent recreations as science and literature are able to furnish will be a very fit occupation of the thoughts and the leisure of young persons, and may be made the means of keeping them from bad employments and bad companions. Moreover, as to that superficial acquaintance with chemistry, and geology, and astronomy, and political economy, and modern history, and biography, and other branches of knowledge, which periodical literature and occasional lectures and

scientific institutions diffuse through the community, I think it a graceful accomplishment, and a suitable, nay, in this day a necessary accomplishment, in the case of educated men. Nor, lastly, am I disparaging or discouraging the thorough acquisition of any one of these studies, or denying that, as far as it goes, such thorough acquisition is a real education of the mind. All I say is, call things by their right names, and do not confuse together ideas which are essentially different. A thorough knowledge of one science and a superficial acquaintance with many are not the same thing; a smattering of a hundred things or a memory for detail is not a philosophical or comprehensive view. Recreations are not education; accomplishments are not education. Do not say, the people must be educated, when, after all, you only mean, amused, refreshed, soothed, put into good spirits and good humour, or kept from vicious excesses. I do not say that such amusements, such occupations of mind, are not a great gain; but they are not education. You may as well call drawing and fencing education, as a general knowledge of botany or conchology. Stuffing birds or playing stringed instruments is an elegant pastime, and a resource to the idle, but it is not education; it does not form or cultivate the intellect. Education is a high word; it is the preparation for knowledge, and it is the imparting of knowledge in proportion to that preparation. We require intellectual eyes to know withal, as bodily eyes for sight. We need both objects and organs intellectual; we cannot gain them without setting about it; we cannot gain them in our sleep, or by haphazard. The best telescope does not dispense with eyes; the printing press or the lecture room will assist us greatly, but we must be true to ourselves, we must be parties in the work. A University is, according to the usual designation, an Alma Mater, knowing her children one by one, not a foundry, or a mint, or a treadmill.

9

I protest to you, Gentlemen, that if I had to choose between a so-called University, which dispensed with residence and tutorial superintendence, and gave its degrees to any person who passed an examination in a wide range of subjects, and a University which had no professors or examinations at all, but merely brought a number of young men together for three or four years, and then sent them away as the University of Oxford is said to have done some sixty years since, if I were asked which of these two methods was the better discipline of the intellect, — mind, I do not say which is *morally* the better, for it is plain that compulsory study must be a good and idleness an intolerable mischief, — but if I must determine which of the two courses was the more successful in training, molding, enlarging the mind, which sent out men the more fitted for their secular duties, which produced better public men, men of the world, men whose names would descend to posterity, I have no hesitation in giving the preference to that University which did nothing, over that which exacted of its members an acquaintance with every science under the sun. And, paradox as this may seem, still if results be the test of systems, the influence of the public schools and colleges of England, in the course of the last century, at least will bear out one side of the contrast as I have drawn it. What would come, on the other hand, of the ideal systems of education which have fascinated the imagination of this age, could they ever take effect, and whether they would not produce a generation frivolous, narrow-minded and resourceless, intellectually considered, is a fair subject for debate; but so far is certain, that the Universities and scholastic establishments to which I refer, and which did little more than bring together first boys and then youths in large numbers, these institutions,

with miserable deformities on the side of morals, with a hollow profession of Christianity, and a heathen code of ethics, — I say, at least they can boast of a succession of heroes and statesmen, of literary men and philosophers, of men conspicuous for great natural virtues, for habits of business, for knowledge of life, for practical judgment, for cultivated tastes, for accomplishments, who have made England what it is, — able to subdue the earth, able to domineer over Catholics.

How is this to be explained? I suppose as follows: When a multitude of young men, keen, open-hearted, sympathetic, and observant, as young men are, come together and freely mix with each other, they are sure to learn one from another, even if there be no one to teach them; the conversation of all is a series of lectures to each, and they gain for themselves new ideas and views, fresh matter of thought, and distinct principles for judging and acting, day by day. An infant has to learn the meaning of the information which its senses convey to it, and this seems to be its employment. It fancies all that the eye presents to it to be close to it, till it actually learns the contrary, and thus by practice does it ascertain the relations and uses of those first elements of knowledge which are necessary for its animal existence. A parallel teaching is necessary for our social being, and is secured by a large school or a college; and this effect may be fairly called it its own department an enlargement of mind. It is seeing the world on a small field with little trouble; for the pupils or students come from very different places, and with widely different notions, and there is much to generalize, much to adjust, much to eliminate, there are inter-relations to be defined, and conventional rules to be established, in the process, by which the whole assemblage is molded together, and gains one tone and one character.

Let it be clearly understood, I repeat it, that I am not taking into account moral or religious considerations; I am but saying that that youthful community will constitute a whole, it will embody a specific idea, it will represent a doctrine, it will administer a code of conduct, and it will furnish principles of thought and action. It will give birth to a living teaching, which in course of time will take the shape of a self-perpetuating tradition, or a *genius loci,* as it is sometimes called; which haunts the home where it has been born, and which imbues and forms, more or less, and one by one, every individual who is successively brought under its shadow. Thus it is that, independent of direct instruction on the part of Superiors, there is a sort of self-education in the academic institutions of Protestant England; a characteristic tone of thought, a recognized standard of judgment is found in them, which, as developed in the individual who is submitted to it, becomes a twofold source of strength to him, both from the distinct stamp it impresses on his mind, and from the bond of union which it creates between him and others, — effects which are shared by the authorities of the place, for they themselves have been educated in it, and at all times are exposed to the influence of its ethical atmosphere. Here then is a real teaching, whatever be its standards and principles, true or false; and it at least tends towards cultivation of the intellect; it at least recognizes that knowledge is something more than a sort of passive reception of scraps and details; it is a something, and it does a something, which never will issue from the most strenuous efforts of a set of teachers, with no mutual sympathies and no inter-communion, of a set of examiners with no opinions which they dare profess, and with no common principles, who are teaching or questioning a set of youths who do not know them, and do not know each other, on a large number of subjects, different in kind, and connected by no wide phi-

losophy, three times a week, or three times a year, or once in three years, in chill lecture-rooms or on a pompous anniversary.

10

Nay, self-education in any shape, in the most restricted sense, is preferable to a system of teaching which, professing so much, really does so little for the mind. Shut your College gates against the votary of knowledge, throw him back upon the searchings and the efforts of his own mind; he will gain by being spared an entrance into your Babel. Few indeed there are who can dispense with the stimulus and support of instructors, or will do any thing at all, if left to themselves. And fewer still (though such great minds are to be found), who will not, from such unassisted attempts, contract a self-reliance and a self-esteem, which are not only moral evils, but serious hindrances to the attainment of truth. And next to none, perhaps, or none, who will not be reminded from time to time of the disadvantage under which they lie, by their imperfect grounding, by the breaks, deficiencies, and irregularities of their knowledge, by the eccentricity of opinion and the confusion of principle which they exhibit. They will be too often ignorant of what every one knows and takes for granted, of that multitude of small truths which fall upon the mind like dust, impalpable and ever accumulating; they may be unable to converse, they may argue perversely, they may pride themselves on their worst paradoxes or their grossest truisms, they may be full of their own mode of viewing things, unwilling to be put out of their way, slow to enter into the minds of others; — but, with these and whatever other liabilities upon their heads, they are likely to have more thought, more mind, more philosophy, more true enlargement, than those earnest but ill-used persons, who are forced to load their minds with a score of subjects

against an examination, who have too much on their hands to indulge themselves in thinking or investigation, who devour premiss and conclusion together with indiscriminate greediness, who hold whole sciences on faith, and commit demonstrations to memory, and who too often, as might be expected, when their period of education is passed, throw up all they have learned in disgust, having gained nothing really by their anxious labours, except perhaps the habit of application.

Yet such is the better specimen of the fruit of that ambitious system which has of late years been making way among us: for its result on ordinary minds, and on the common run of students, is less satisfactory still; they leave their place of education simply dissipated and relaxed by the multiplicity of subjects, which they have never really mastered, and so shallow as not even to know their shallowness. How much better, I say, is it for the active and thoughtful intellect, where such is to be found, to eschew the College and the University altogether, than to submit to a drudgery so ignoble, a mockery so contumelious! How much more profitable for the independent mind, after the mere rudiments of education, to range through a library at random, taking down books as they meet him, and pursuing the trains of thought which his mother wit suggests! How much healthier to wander into the fields, and there with the exiled Prince to find "tongues in the trees, books in the running brooks!" How much more genuine an education is that of the poor boy in the Poem* — a Poem, whether in

* This Poem [Crabbe's *Tales of the Hall*], let me say, I read on its first publication, above thirty years ago, with extreme delight, and have never lost my love of it; and on taking it up lately, found I was even more touched by it than heretofore. A work which can please in youth and age, seems to fulfill (in logical language) the *accidental definition* of a Classic. (A further course of twenty years has past, and I bear the same witness in favour of this poem.)

conception or in execution, one of the most touching in our language — who, not in the wide world, but ranging day by day around his widowed mother's home, "a dexterous gleaner" in a narrow field, and with only such slender outfit

> "as the village school and books a few
> Supplied."

contrived from the beach, and the quay, and the fisher's boat, and the inn's fireside, and the tradesman's shop, and the shepherd's walk, and the smuggler's hut, and the mossy moor, and the screaming gulls, and the restless waves, to fashion for himself a philosophy and a poetry of his own!

CAMBRIDGE INAUGURAL ADDRESS

JOHN RUSKIN

Ruskin was by nature a missionary in whom the impulse to severe didacticism was happily tempered with a sensitiveness to the beauty of nature and of art and by the command of a remarkably rich and picturesque flow of language. His missionary zeal took the form therefore of employing his eloquence to impress upon his countrymen the importance of the appreciation of art. It is characteristic of Ruskin and of the nation that he represents that the values in art which he particularly emphasized were its usefulness and its truth. A work of art should be beautiful, of course, but its beauty should be in answer to some immediate practical service, or expressive of some aspect of nature, or a reflection of spiritual truth. "Pure" ornament and "art for art's sake" he utterly despised. The style in which he conveyed his ideas is quite lacking in the qualities of persuasiveness which are conspicuous in the writings of a Newman or Matthew Arnold. His way was rather to bear down his reader with the force of his intense moral earnestness, with the vehemence and ardor of his rhetoric. (The essay here reproduced was delivered as an address at the opening of the Cambridge School of Art, October 29, 1858, and printed with revisions in pamphlet form. It is reprinted in *On the Old Road,* 1885, and in the Library Edition of the *Works,* edited by Cook and Wedderburn, Vol. XVI.)

CAMBRIDGE INAUGURAL ADDRESS

I SUPPOSE the persons interested in establishing a School of Art for Workmen may in the main be divided into two classes, namely, first, those who chiefly desire to make the men themselves happier, wiser, and better; and secondly, those who desire to enable them to produce better and more valuable work. These two objects may, of course, be kept both in view at the same time; nevertheless, there is a wide difference in the spirit with which we shall approach our task, according to the motive of these two which weighs most with us — a difference great enough to divide, as I have said, the promoters of any such scheme into two distinct classes; one philanthropic in the gist of its aim, and the other commercial in the gist of its aim; one desiring the workman to be better informed chiefly for his own sake, and the other chiefly that he may be enabled to produce for us commodities precious in themselves, and which shall successfully compete with those of other countries.

2. And this separation in motives must lead also to a distinction in the machinery of the work. The philanthropists address themselves, not to the artisan merely, but to the labourer in general, desiring in any possible way to refine the habits or increase the happiness of our whole working population, by giving them new recreations or new thoughts: and the principles of Art-education adopted in a school which has this wide but somewhat indeterminate aim, are, or should be, very different from those adopted in a school meant for the special instruction of the artisan in his own business. I do not think this distinction is yet firmly enough

fixed in our minds, or calculated upon in our plans of operation. We have hitherto acted, it seems to me, under a vague impression that the arts of drawing and painting might be, up to a certain point, taught in a general way to every one, and would do every one equal good; and that each class of operatives might afterwards bring this general knowledge into use in their own trade, according to its requirements. Now, that is not so. A wood-carver needs for his business to learn drawing in quite a different way from a china-painter, and a jeweller from a worker in iron. They must be led to study quite different characters in the natural forms they introduce in their various manufacture. It is no use to teach an iron-worker to observe the down on a peach, and of none to teach laws of atmospheric effect to a carver in wood. So far as their business is concerned, their brains would be vainly occupied by such things, and they would be prevented from pursuing, with enough distinctness or intensity, the qualities of Art which can alone be expressed in the materials with which they each have to do.

3. Now, I believe it to be wholly impossible to teach special application of Art principles to various trades in a single school. That special application can be only learned rightly by the experience of years in the particular work required. The power of each material, and the difficulties connected with its treatment, are not so much to be taught as to be felt; it is only by repeated touch and continued trial beside the forge or the furnace, that the goldsmith can find out how to govern his gold, or the glass-worker his crystal; and it is only by watching and assisting the actual practice of a master in the business, that the apprentice can learn the efficient secrets of manipulation, or perceive the true limits of the involved conditions of design. It seems to me, therefore, that all idea of reference to definite businesses should be abandoned in such schools as that just established: we

can have neither the materials, the conveniences, nor the empirical skill in the master, necessary to make such teaching useful. All specific Art-teaching must be given in schools established by each trade for itself: and when our operatives are a little more enlightened on these matters, there will be found, as I have already stated in my lectures on the political economy of Art, absolute necessity for the establishment of guilds of trades in an active and practical form, for the purposes of ascertaining the principles of Art proper to their business, and instructing their apprentices in them, as well as making experiments on materials, and on newly-invented methods of procedure; besides many other functions which I cannot now enter into account of. All this for the present, and in a school such as this, I repeat, we cannot hope for: we shall obtain no satisfactory result, unless we give up such hope, and set ourselves to teaching the operative, however employed — be he farmer's labourer, or manufacturer's; be he mechanic, artificer, shopman, sailor, or ploughman — teaching, I say, as far as we can, one and the same thing to all; namely, Sight.

4. Not a slight thing to teach, this: perhaps, on the whole, the most important thing to be taught in the whole range of teaching. To be taught to read — what is the use of that, if you know not whether what you read is false or true? To be taught to write or to speak — but what is the use of speaking, if you have nothing to say? To be taught to think — nay, what is the use of being able to think, if you have nothing to think of? But to be taught to see is to gain word and thought at once, and both true. There is a vague acknowledgment of this in the way people are continually expressing their longing for light, until all the common language of our prayers and hymns has sunk into little more than one monotonous metaphor, dimly twisted into alternate languages, — asking first in Latin to be illuminated; and then in Eng-

lish to be enlightened; and then in Latin again to be delivered out of obscurity; and then in English to be delivered out of darkness; and then for beams, and rays, and suns, and stars, and lamps, until sometimes one wishes that, at least for religious purposes, there were no such words as light or darkness in existence. Still, the main instinct which makes people endure this perpetuity of repetition is a true one; only the main thing they want and ought to ask for is, not light, but Sight. It doesn't matter how much light you have if you don't know how to use it. It may very possibly put out your eyes, instead of helping them. Besides, we want, in this world of ours, very often to be able to see in the dark — that's the great gift of all; — but at any rate to see no matter by what light, so only we can see things as they are. On my word, we should soon make it a different world, if we could get but a little — ever so little — of the dervish's ointment in the Arabian Nights, not to show us the treasures of the earth, but the facts of it.

5. However, whether these things be generally true or not, at all events it is certain that our immediate business, in such a school as this, will prosper more by attending to eyes than to hands; we shall always do most good by simply endeavouring to enable the student to see natural objects clearly and truly. We ought not even to try too strenuously to give him the power of representing them. That power may be acquired, more or less, by exercises which are no wise conducive to accuracy of sight: and, *vice versa*, accuracy of sight may be gained by exercises which in no wise conduce to ease of representation. For instance, it very much assists the power of drawing to spend many hours in the practice of washing in flat tints; but all this manual practice does not in the least increase the student's power of determining what the tint of a given object actually is. He would be more advanced in the knowledge of the facts by a single hour of

well-directed and well-*corrected* effort, rubbing out and putting in again, lightening, and darkening, and scratching, and blotching, in patient endeavours to obtain concordance with fact, issuing perhaps, after all, in total destruction or unpresentability of the drawing; but also in acute perception of the things he has been attempting to copy in it. Of course, there is always a vast temptation, felt both by the master and student, to struggle towards visible results, and obtain something beautiful, creditable, or saleable, in way of actual drawing: but the more I see of schools, the more reason I see to look with doubt upon those which produce too many showy and complete works by pupils. A showy work will always be found, on stern examination of it, to have been done by some conventional rule; — some servile compliance with directions which the student does not see the reason for; and representation of truths which he has not himself perceived; the execution of such drawings will be found monotonous and lifeless; their light and shade specious and formal, but false. A drawing which the pupil has learned much in doing, is nearly always full of blunders and mishaps, and it is highly necessary for the formation of a truly public or universal school of Art, that the masters should not try to conceal or anticipate such blunders, but only seek to employ the pupil's time so as to get the most precious results for his understanding and his heart, not for his hand.

6. For, observe, the best that you can do in the production of drawing, or of draughtsmanship, must always be nothing in itself, unless the whole life be given to it. An amateur's drawing, or a workman's drawing — anybody's drawing but an artist's, is always valueless in itself. It may be, as you have just heard Mr. Redgrave tell you, most precious as a memorial, or as a gift, or as a means of noting useful facts; but as Art, an amateur's drawing is always wholly

worthless; and it ought to be one of our great objects to make the pupil understand and feel that, and prevent his trying to make his valueless work look, in some superficial, hypocritical, eye-catching, penny-catching way, like work that is really good.

7. If, therefore, we have to do with pupils belonging to the higher ranks of life, our main duty will be to make them good judges of Art, rather than artists; for though I had a month to speak to you, instead of an hour, time would fail me if I tried to trace the various ways in which we suffer, nationally, for want of powers of enlightened judgment of Art in our upper and middle classes. Not that this judgment can ever be obtained without discipline of the hand: no man ever was a thorough judge of painting who could not draw; but the drawing should only be thought of as a means of fixing his attention upon the subtleties of the Art put before him, or of enabling him to record such natural facts as are necessary for comparison with it. I should also attach the greatest importance to severe limitation of choice in the examples submitted to him. To study one good master till you understand him will teach you more than a superficial acquaintance with a thousand: power of criticism does not consist in knowing the names or the manner of many painters, but in discerning the excellence of a few.

If, on the contrary, our teaching is addressed more definitely to the operative, we need not endeavour to render his powers of criticism very acute. About many forms of existing Art, the less he knows the better. His sensibilities are to be cultivated with respect to nature chiefly; and his imagination, if possible, to be developed, even though somewhat to the disadvantage of his judgment. It is better that his work should be bold, than faultless: and better that it should be delightful, than discreet.

8. And this leads me to the second, or commercial, ques-

tion; namely, how to get from the workman, after we have trained him, the best and most precious work, so as to enable ourselves to compete with foreign countries, or develop new branches of commerce in our own.

Many of us, perhaps, are under the impression that plenty of schooling will do this; that plenty of lecturing will do it; that sending abroad for patterns will do it; or that patience, time, and money, and goodwill may do it. And, alas, none of these things, nor all of them put together, will do it. If you want really good work, such as will be acknowledged by all the world, there is but one way of getting it, and that is a difficult one. You may offer any premium you choose for it — but you will find it can't be done for premiums. You may send for patterns to the antipodes — but you will find it can't be done upon patterns. You may lecture on the principles of Art to every school in the kingdom — and you will find it can't be done upon principles. You may wait patiently for the progress of the age — and you will find your Art is unprogressive. Or you may set yourselves impatiently to urge it by the inventions of the age — and you will find your chariot of Art entirely immovable either by screw or paddle. There's no way of getting good Art, I repeat, but one — at once the simplest and most difficult — namely, to enjoy it. Examine the history of nations, and you will find this great fact clear and unmistakable on the front of it — that good Art has only been produced by nations who rejoiced in it; fed themselves with it, as if it were bread; basked in it, as if it were sunshine; shouted at the sight of it; danced with the delight of it; quarrelled for it; fought for it; starved for it; did, in fact, precisely the opposite with it of what we want to do with it — they made it to keep, and we to sell.

9. And truly this is a serious difficulty for us as a commercial nation. The very primary motive with which we set

about the business, makes the business impossible. The first and absolute condition of the thing's ever becoming saleable is, that we shall make it without wanting to sell it; nay, rather with a determination not to sell it at any price, if once we get hold of it. Try to make your Art popular, cheap — a fair article for your foreign market; and the foreign market will always show something better. But make it only to please yourselves, and even be resolved that you won't let anybody else have any; and forthwith you will find everybody else wants it. And observe, the insuperable difficulty is this making it to please ourselves, while we are incapable of pleasure. Take, for instance, the simplest example, which we can all understand, in the art of dress. We have made a great fuss about the patterns of silk lately; wanting to vie with Lyons, and make a Paris of London. Well, we may try for ever: so long as we don't really enjoy silk patterns, we shall never get any. And we don't enjoy them. Of course, all ladies like their dresses to sit well, and be becoming; but of real enjoyment of the beauty of the silk, for the silk's own sake, I find none; for the test of that enjoyment is, that they would like it also to sit well, and look well, on somebody else. The pleasure of being well dressed, or even of seeing well-dressed people — for I will suppose in my fair hearers that degree of unselfishness — be that pleasure great or small, is quite a different thing from delight in the beauty and play of the silken folds and colours themselves, for their own gorgeousness or grace.

10. I have just had a remarkable proof of the total want of this feeling in the modern mind. I was staying part of this summer in Turin, for the purpose of studying one of the Paul Veroneses there — the presentation of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon. Well, one of the most notable characters in this picture is the splendour of its silken dresses: and, in particular, there was a piece of white brocade, with

designs upon it in gold, which it was one of my chief objects in stopping at Turin to copy. You may, perhaps, be surprised at this; but I must just note in passing, that I share this weakness of enjoying dress patterns with all good students and all good painters. It doesn't matter what school they belong to, — Fra Angelico, Perugino, John Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, Tintoret, Veronese, Leonardo da Vinci — no matter how they differ in other respects, all of them like dress patterns; and what is more, the nobler the painter is, the surer he is to do his patterns well.

11. I stayed then, as I say, to make a study of this white brocade. It generally happens in public galleries that the best pictures are the worst placed; and this Veronese is not only hung at considerable height above the eye, but over a door, through which, however, as all the visitors to the gallery must pass, they cannot easily overlook the picture, though they would find great difficulty in examining it. Beside this door, I had a stage erected for my work, which being of some height and rather in a corner, enabled me to observe, without being observed myself, the impression made by the picture on the various visitors. It seemed to me that if ever a work of Art caught popular attention, this ought to do so. It was of very large size; of brilliant colour, and of agreeable subject. There are about twenty figures in it, the principal ones being life size: that of Solomon, though in the shade, is by far the most perfect conception of the young king in his pride of wisdom and beauty which I know in the range of Italian art; the queen is one of the loveliest of Veronese's female figures; all the accessories are full of grace and imagination; and the finish of the whole so perfect that one day I was upwards of two hours vainly trying to render, with perfect accuracy, the curves of two leaves of the brocaded silk. The English travellers used to walk through the room in considerable numbers; and were in-

variably directed to the picture by their laquais de place, if they missed seeing it themselves. And to this painting — in which it took me six weeks to examine rightly two figures — I found that on an average, the English traveller who was doing Italy conscientiously, and seeing everything as he thought he ought, gave about half or three-quarters of a minute; but the flying or fashionable traveller, who came to do as much as he could in a given time, never gave more than a single glance, most of such people turning aside instantly to a bad landscape hung on the right, containing a vigorously painted white wall, and an opaque green moat. What especially impressed me, however, was that none of the ladies ever stopped to look at the dresses in the Veronese. Certainly they were far more beautiful than any in the shops in the great square, yet no one ever noticed them. Sometimes when any nice, sharp-looking, bright-eyed girl came into the room, I used to watch her all the way, thinking — "Come, at least *you'll* see what the Queen of Sheba has got on." But no — on she would come carelessly, with a little toss of the head, apparently signifying "nothing in *this* room worth looking at — except myself," and so trip through the door, and away.

12. The fact is, we don't care for pictures: in very deed we don't. The Academy exhibition is a thing to talk of and to amuse vacant hours; those who are rich amongst us buy a painting or two, for mixed reasons, sometimes to fill the corner of a passage — sometimes to help the drawing-room talk before dinner — sometimes because the painter is fashionable — occasionally because he is poor — not unfrequently that we may have a collection of specimens of painting, as we have specimens of minerals or butterflies — and in the best and rarest case of all, because we have really, as we call it, taken a fancy to the picture; meaning the same sort of fancy which one would take to a pretty arm-chair or

a newly-shaped decanter. But as for real love of the picture, and joy of it when we have got it, I do not believe it is felt by one in a thousand.

13. I am afraid this apathy of ours will not be easily conquered; but even supposing it should, and that we should begin to enjoy pictures properly, and that the supply of good ones increased as in that case it *would* increase — then comes another question. Perhaps some of my hearers this evening may occasionally have heard it stated of me that I am rather apt to contradict myself. I hope I am exceedingly apt to do so. I never met with a question yet, of any importance, which did not need, for the right solution of it, at least one positive and one negative answer, like an equation of the second degree. Mostly, matters of any consequence are three-sided, or four-sided, or polygonal; and the trotting round a polygon is severe work for people any way stiff in their opinions. For myself, I am never satisfied that I have handled a subject properly till I have contradicted myself at least three times: but once must do for this evening. I have just said that there is no chance of our getting good Art unless we delight in it: next I say, and just as positively, that there is no chance of our getting good Art unless we resist our delight in it. We must love it first, and restrain our love for it afterwards.

14. This sounds strange; and yet I assure you it is true. In fact, whenever anything does not sound strange, you may generally doubt its being true; for all truth is wonderful. But take an instance in physical matters, of the same kind of contradiction. Suppose you were explaining to a young student in astronomy how the earth was kept steady in its orbit; you would have to state to him — would you not? — that the earth always had a tendency to fall to the sun; and that also it always had a tendency to fly away from the sun. These are two precisely contrary statements for him to

digest at his leisure, before he can understand how the earth moves. Now, in like manner, when Art is set in its true and serviceable course, it moves under the luminous attraction of pleasure on the one side, and with a stout moral purpose of going about some useful business on the other. If the artist works without delight, he passes away into space, and perishes of cold: if he works only for delight, he falls into the sun, and extinguishes himself in ashes. On the whole, this last is the fate, I do not say the most to be feared, but which Art has generally hitherto suffered, and which the great nations of the earth have suffered with it.

15. For, while most distinctly you may perceive in past history that Art has never been produced, except by nations who took pleasure in it, just as assuredly, and even more plainly, you may perceive that Art has always destroyed the power and life of those who pursued it for pleasure only. Surely this fact must have struck you as you glanced at the career of the great nations of the earth: surely it must have occurred to you as a point for serious questioning, how far, even in our days, we were wise in promoting the advancement of pleasures which appeared as yet only to have corrupted the souls and numbed the strength of those who attained to them. I have been complaining of England that she despises the Arts; but I might, with still more appearance of justice, complain that she does not rather dread them than despise. For, what has been the source of the ruin of nations since the world began? Has it been plague, or famine, earthquake-shock or volcano-flame? None of these ever prevailed against a great people, so as to make their name pass from the earth. In every period and place of national decline, you will find other causes than these at work to bring it about, namely, luxury, effeminacy, love of pleasure, fineness in Art, ingenuity in enjoyment. What is the main lesson

which, as far as we seek any in our classical reading, we gather for our youth from ancient history? Surely this — that simplicity of life, of language, and of manners gives strength to a nation; and that luxuriousness of life, subtlety of language, and smoothness of manners bring weakness and destruction on a nation. While men possess little and desire less, they remain brave and noble: while they are scornful of all the arts of luxury, and are in the sight of other nations as barbarians, their swords are irresistible and their sway illimitable: but let them become sensitive to the refinements of taste, and quick in the capacities of pleasure, and, that instant, the fingers, that had grasped the iron rod, fail from the golden sceptre. You cannot charge me with any exaggeration in this matter; it is impossible to state the truth too strongly, or as too universal. For ever you will see the rude and simple nation at once more virtuous and more victorious than one practised in the arts. Watch how the Lydian is overthrown by the Persian; the Persian by the Athenian; the Athenian by the Spartan; then the whole of polished Greece by the rougher Roman; the Roman, in his turn refined, only to be crushed by the Goth: and at the turning point of the Middle Ages, the liberty of Europe first asserted, the virtues of Christianity best practised, and its doctrines best attested, by a handful of mountain shepherds, without art, without literature, almost without a language, yet remaining unconquered in the midst of the Teutonic chivalry, and uncorrupted amidst the hierarchies of Rome.*

* I ought perhaps to remind the reader that this statement refers to two different societies among the Alps; the Waldenses in the thirteenth, and the people of the Forest Cantons in the fourteenth and following centuries. Protestants are perhaps apt sometimes to forget that the virtues of these mountaineers were shown in connection with vital forms of opposing religions; and that the patriots of Schwytz and Uri were as zealous Roman Catholics as they were good soldiers. We have to lay to their charge the death of Zuinglius as well as of Gessler.

16. I was strangely struck by this great fact during the course of a journey last summer among the northern vales of Switzerland. My mind had been turned to the subject of the ultimate effects of Art on national mind before I left England, and I went straight to the chief fields of Swiss history: first to the centre of her feudal power, Hapsburg, the hawk's nest from which the Swiss Rodolph rose to found the Austrian empire; and then to the heart of her republicanism, that little glen of Morgarten, where first in the history of Europe the shepherd's staff prevailed over the soldier's spear. And it was somewhat depressing to me to find, as day by day I found more certainly, that this people which first asserted the liberties of Europe, and first conceived the idea of equitable laws, was in all the — shall I call them the slighter, or the higher? — sensibilities of the human mind, utterly deficient; and not only had remained from its earliest ages till now, without poetry, without Art, and without music, except a mere modulated cry; but as far as I could judge from the rude efforts of their early monuments, would have been at the time of their greatest national probity and power, incapable of producing good poetry or Art under any circumstances of education.

17. I say, this was a sad thing for me to find. And then, to mend the matter, I went straight over into Italy, and came at once upon a curious instance of the patronage of Art, of the character that usually inclines most to such patronage, and of the consequences thereof.

From Morgarten and Grütli, I intended to have crossed to the Vaudois Valleys, to examine the shepherd character there; but on the way I had to pass through Turin, where unexpectedly I found the Paul Veroneses, one of which, as I told you just now, stayed me at once for six weeks. Naturally enough, one asked how these beautiful Veroneses came there: and found they had been commissioned by

Cardinal Maurice of Savoy. Worthy Cardinal, I thought: that's what Cardinals were made for. However, going a little farther in the gallery, one comes upon four very graceful pictures by Albani — these also commissioned by the Cardinal, and commissioned with special directions, according to the Cardinal's fancy. Four pictures, to be illustrative of the four elements.

18. One of the most curious things in the mind of the people of that century is their delight in these four elements, and in the four seasons. They had hardly any other idea of decorating a room, or of choosing a subject for a picture, than by some renewed reference to fire and water, or summer and winter; nor were ever tired of hearing that summer came after spring, and that air was not earth, until these interesting pieces of information got finally and poetically expressed in that well-known piece of elegant English conversation about the weather, Thomson's *Seasons*. So the Cardinal, not appearing to have any better idea than the popular one, orders the four elements; but thinking that the elements pure would be slightly dull, he orders them, in one way or another, to be mixed up with Cupids; to have, in his own words, "una copiosa quantita di Amorini." * Albani supplied the Cardinal accordingly with Cupids in clusters: they hang in the sky like bunches of cherries; and leap out of the sea like flying fish; grow out of the earth in fairy rings; and explode out of the fire like squibs. No work whatsoever is done in any of the four elements, but by the Cardinal's Cupids. They are ploughing the earth with their arrows; fishing in the sea with their bowstrings; driving the clouds with their breath; and fanning the fire with their wings. A few beautiful nymphs are assisting them here and there in pearl-fishing, flower-gathering, and other such branches of graceful industry; the moral of the whole being, that the sea

* [An abundant quantity of Cupids.]

was made for its pearls, the earth for its flowers, and all the world for pleasure.

19. Well, the Cardinal, this great encourager of the arts, having these industrial and social theories, carried them out in practice, as you may perhaps remember, by obtaining a dispensation from the Pope to marry his own niece, and building a villa for her on one of the slopes of the pretty hills which rise to the east of the city. The villa which he built is now one of the principal objects of interest to the traveller as an example of Italian domestic architecture: to me, during my stay in the city, it was much more than an object of interest; for its deserted gardens were by much the pleasantest place I could find for walking or thinking in, in the hot summer afternoons.

I say thinking, for these gardens often gave me a good deal to think about. They are, as I told you, on the slope of the hill above the city, to the east; commanding, therefore, the view over it and beyond it, westward — a view which, perhaps, of all those that can be obtained north of the Apennines, gives the most comprehensive idea of the nature of Italy, considered as one great country. If you glance at the map, you will observe that Turin is placed in the centre of the crescent which the Alps form round the basin of Piedmont; it is within ten miles of the foot of the mountains at the nearest point; and from that point the chain extends half round the city in one unbroken Moorish crescent, forming three-fourths of a circle from the Col de Tende to the St. Gothard; that is to say, just two hundred miles of Alps, as the bird flies. I don't speak rhetorically or carelessly; I speak as I ought to speak here — with mathematical precision. Take the scale on your map; measure fifty miles of it accurately; try that measure from the Col de Tende to the St. Gothard, and you will find that four cords of fifty miles will not quite reach to the two extremities of the curve.

20. You see, then, from this spot, the plain of Piedmont, on the north and south, literally as far as the eye can reach; so that the plain terminates as the sea does, with a level blue line, only tufted with woods instead of waves, and crowded with towers of cities instead of ships. Then in the luminous air beyond and behind this blue horizon-line, stand, as it were, the shadows of mountains, they themselves dark, for the southern slopes of the Alps of the Lago Maggiore and Bellinzona are all without snow; but the light of the unseen snow-fields, lying level behind the visible peaks, is sent up with strange reflection upon the clouds; an everlasting light of calm Aurora in the north. Then, higher and higher around the approaching darkness of the plain, rise the central chains, not as on the Switzer's side, a recognizable group and following of successive and separate hills, but a wilderness of jagged peaks, cast in passionate and fierce profusion along the circumference of heaven; precipice behind precipice, and gulf beyond gulf, filled with the flaming of the sunset, and forming mighty channels for the flowings of the clouds, which roll up against them out of the vast Italian plain, forced together by the narrowing crescent, and breaking up at last against the Alpine wall in towers of spectral spray; or sweeping up its ravines with long moans of complaining thunder. Out from between the cloudy pillars, as they pass, emerge for ever the great battlements of the memorable and perpetual hills: Viso, with her shepherd-witnesses to ancient faith; Rocca-Melone, the highest place of Alpine pilgrimage; * Iseran, who shed her burial sheets of snow about the

* The summit of Rocca-Melone is the sharp peak seen from Turin on the right hand of the gorge of the Cenis, dominant over the low projecting pyramid of the hill called by De Saussure, Montagne de Musinet. Rocca-Melone rises to a height of 11,000 feet above the sea, and its peak is a place of pilgrimage to this day, though it seems temporarily to have ceased to be so in the time of De Saussure, who thus speaks of it:

"Il y a eu pendant long-temps sur cette cime, une petite chapelle avec

march of Hannibal; Cenis, who shone with her glacier light on the descent of Charlemagne; Paradiso, who watched with her opposite crest the stoop of the French eagle to Marengo; and underneath all these, lying in her soft languor, this tender Italy, lapped in dews of sleep, or more than sleep — one knows not if it is trance, from which morning shall yet roll the blinding mists away, or if the fair shadows of her quietude are indeed the shades of purple death. And, lifted a little above this solemn plain, and looking beyond it to its snowy ramparts, vainly guardian, stands this palace dedicate to pleasure, the whole legend of Italy's past history written before it by the finger of God, written as with an iron pen upon the rock for ever, on all these fronting walls of reproachful Alp; blazoned in gold of lightning upon the clouds that still open and close their unsealed scrolls in heaven; painted in purple and scarlet upon the mighty missal pages of sunset after sunset, spread vainly before a nation's eyes for a nation's prayer. So stands this palace of pleasure; desolate as it deserves — desolate in smooth corridor and glittering chamber — desolate in pleached walk and planted bower — desolate in that worst and bitterest abandonment which leaves no light of memory. No ruins are here of walls rent

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une image de Notre Dame qui etoit en grande vénération dans le pays, et où un grand nombre de gens alloient au mois d'août en procession, de Suze et des environs; mais le sentier qui conduit à cette chapelle est si étroit et si scabreux qu'il n'y avoit presque pas d'années qu'il n'y périt du monde; la fatigue et la rareté de l'air saisissoient ceux qui avoient plutôt consulté leur dévotion que leurs forces; ils tombèrent en défaillance, et de là dans le précipice." [There has long been on this summit a little chapel with an image of Our Lady, which was held in great veneration in the countryside and to which great crowds went in procession during the month of August from Suze and its environs; but the path which leads to this chapel is so narrow and rugged that there was scarcely a year when many people did not perish on it; the exhaustion and the thinness of the atmosphere attacked those who had reckoned more on their devoutness than their strength; they fell in a faint, and so over the precipice.]

by war, and falling above their defenders into mounds of graves: no remnants are here of chapel-altar, or temple porch, left shattered or silent by the power of some purer worship: no vestiges are here of sacred hearth and sweet homestead, left lonely through vicissitudes of fate, and heaven-sent sorrow. Nothing is here but the vain apparellings of pride sunk into dishonour, and vain appanages of delight now no more delightsome. The hill-waters, that once flowed and plashed in the garden fountains, now trickle sadly through the weeds that encumber their basins, with a sound as of tears: the creeping, insidious, neglected flowers weave their burning nets about the white marble of the balustrades, and rend them slowly, block from block, and stone from stone: the thin, sweet-scented leaves tremble along the old masonry joints as if with palsy at every breeze; and the dark lichens, golden and grey, make the foot-fall silent in the path's centre.

And day by day as I walked there, the same sentence seemed whispered by every shaking leaf, and every dying echo, of garden and chamber. "Thus end all the arts of life, only in death; and thus issue all the gifts of man, only in his dishonour, when they are pursued or possessed in the service of pleasure only."

21. This then is the great enigma of Art History, — you must not follow Art without pleasure, nor must you follow it for the sake of pleasure. And the solution of that enigma is simply this fact; that wherever Art has been followed *only* for the sake of luxury or delight, it has contributed, and largely contributed, to bring about the destruction of the nation practising it: but wherever Art has been used *also* to teach any truth, or supposed truth — religious, moral, or natural — there it has elevated the nation practising it, and itself with the nation.

22. Thus the Art of Greece rose, and did service to the

people, so long as it was to them the earnest interpreter of a religion they believed in: the Arts of northern sculpture and architecture rose, as interpreters of Christian legend and doctrine: the Art of painting in Italy, not only as religious, but also mainly as expressive of truths of moral philosophy, and powerful in pure human portraiture. The only great painters in our schools of painting in England have either been of portrait — Reynolds and Gainsborough; of the philosophy of social life — Hogarth; or of the facts of nature in landscape — Wilson and Turner. In all these cases, if I had time, I could show you that the success of the painter depended on his desire to convey a truth, rather than to produce a merely beautiful picture; that is to say, to get a likeness of a man, or of a place; to get some moral principle rightly stated, or some historical character rightly described, rather than merely to give pleasure to the eyes. Compare the feeling with which a Moorish architect decorated an arch of the Alhambra, with that of Hogarth painting the "Marriage à la Mode," or of Wilkie painting the "Chelsea Pensioners," and you will at once feel the difference between Art pursued for pleasure only, and for the sake of some useful principle or impression.

23. But what you might not so easily discern is, that even when painting does appear to have been pursued for pleasure only, if ever you find it rise to any noble level, you will also find that a stern search after truth has been at the root of its nobleness. You may fancy, perhaps, that Titian, Veronese, and Tintoret were painters for the sake of pleasure only: but in reality they were the only painters who ever sought entirely to master, and who did entirely master, the truths of light and shade as associated with colour, in the noblest of all physical created things, the human form. They were the only men who ever painted the human body; all

other painters of the great schools are mere anatomical draughtsmen compared to them; rather makers of maps of the body, than painters of it. The Venetians alone, by a toil almost superhuman, succeeded at last in obtaining a power almost superhuman; and were able finally to paint the highest visible work of God with unexaggerated structure, undegraded colour, and unaffected gesture. It seems little to say this; but I assure you it is much to have *done* this — so much, that no other men but the Venetians ever did it: none of them ever painted the human body without in some degree caricaturing the anatomy, forcing the action, or degrading the hue.

24. Now, therefore, the sum of all is, that you who wish to encourage Art in England have to do two things with it: you must delight in it, in the first place; and you must get it to serve some serious work, in the second place. I don't mean by serious, necessarily moral: all that I mean by serious is in some way or other useful, not mere selfish, careless, or indolent. I had, indeed, intended before closing my address, to have traced out a few of the directions in which, as it seems to me, Art may be seriously and practically serviceable to us in the career of civilization. I had hoped to show you how many of the great phenomena of nature still remained unrecorded by it, for *us* to record; how many of the historical monuments of Europe were perishing without memorial, for the want of but a little honest, simple, laborious, loving draughtsmanship; how many of the most impressive historical events of the day failed of teaching us half of what they were meant to teach, for want of painters to represent them faithfully, instead of fancifully, and with historical truth for their aim, instead of national self-glorification. I had hoped to show you how many of the best impulses of the heart were lost in frivolity or sensuality, for want of purer beauty to contemplate, and

of noble thoughts to associate with the fervour of hallowed human passion; how, finally, a great part of the vital power of our religious faith was lost in us, for want of such art as would realize in some rational, probable, believable way, those events of sacred history which, as they visibly and intelligibly occurred, may also be visibly and intelligibly represented. But all this I dare not do yet. I felt, as I thought over these things, that the time was not yet come for their declaration: the time will come for it, and I believe soon; but as yet, the man would only lay himself open to the charge of vanity, of imagination, and of idle fondness of hope, who should venture to trace in words the course of the higher blessings which the Arts may have yet in store for mankind. As yet there is no need to do so: all that we have to plead for is an earnest and straightforward exertion in those courses of study which are opened to us day by day, believing only that they are to be followed gravely and for grave purposes, as by men, and not by children. I appeal, finally, to all those who are to become the pupils of these schools, to keep clear of the notion of following Art as dilettantism: it ought to delight you, as your reading delights you — but you never think of your reading as dilettantism. It ought to delight you as your studies of physical science delight you — but you don't call physical science dilettantism. If you are determined only to think of Art as a play or a pleasure, give it up at once: you will do no good to yourselves, and you will degrade the pursuit in the sight of others. Better, infinitely better, that you should never enter a picture gallery, than that you should enter only to saunter and to smile: better, infinitely better, that you should never handle a pencil at all, than handle it only for the sake of complacency in your small dexterity: better, infinitely better, that you should be wholly uninterested in pictures, and uninformed respecting them, than that you should just know

enough to detect blemishes in great works, — to give a colour of reasonableness to presumption, and an appearance of acuteness to misunderstanding. Above all, I would plead for this so far as the teaching of these schools may be addressed to the junior Members of the University. Men employed in any kind of manual labour, by which they must live, are not likely to take up the notion that they can learn any other art for amusement only; but amateurs are: and it is of the highest importance, nay, it is just the one thing of all importance, to show them what drawing really means; and not so much to teach them to produce a good work themselves, as to know it when they see it done by others. Good work, in the stern sense of the word, as I before said, no mere amateur can do; and good work, in any sense, that is to say, profitable work for himself or for any one else, he can only do by being made in the beginning to see what is possible for him, and what not; — what is accessible, and what not; and by having the majesty and sternness of the everlasting laws of fact set before him in their infinitude. It is no matter for appalling him: the man is great already who is made well capable of being appalled; nor do we even wisely hope, nor truly understand, till we are humiliated by our hope, and awe-struck by our understanding. Nay, I will go farther than this, and say boldly, that what you have mainly to teach the young men here is, not so much what they can do, as what they cannot; — to make them see how much there is in nature which cannot be imitated, and how much in man which cannot be emulated. He only can be truly said to be educated in Art to whom all his work is only a feeble sign of glories which he cannot convey, and a feeble means of measuring, with ever-enlarging admiration, the great and untraversable gulf which God has set between the great and the common intelligences of mankind: and all the triumphs of

Art which man can commonly achieve are only truly crowned by pure delight in natural scenes themselves, and by the sacred and self-forgetful veneration which can be nobly abashed, and tremblingly exalted, in the presence of a human spirit greater than his own.

ON THE WRITING OF ESSAYS

ALEXANDER SMITH

The *essay,* even if we leave out of account the loose employment of the term to designate any kind of formal or informal composition for which there is no specific name, has baffled definition even more than other literary types. The most satisfactory attempts (and there has been a fair number of them) have been those which aimed at conveying an impression of the spirit rather than to prescribe its substance or differentiate its technique. Alexander Smith's essay, by bringing into relief the contrast between the two great fountain-heads of all essay-writing in modern times, avoids the danger of giving too narrow a scope to the form. No better view can be offered of the significance of the essay than through his illuminating appreciation of Montaigne. Alexander Smith is one of the lesser poets of his generation whose several volumes of essays, revealing also a strain of genuine poetic feeling, are conspicuous in a period which had witnessed a sharp decline from the level of Lamb and Hazlitt. (The essay appears in *Dreamthorp,* 1863.)

ON THE WRITING OF ESSAYS

I HAVE already described my environments and my mode of life, and out of both I contrive to extract a very tolerable amount of satisfaction. Love in a cottage, with a broken window to let in the rain, is not my idea of comfort; no more is Dignity, walking forth richly clad, to whom every head uncovers, every knee grows supple. Bruin in winter time fondly sucking his own paws, loses flesh; and love, feeding upon itself, dies of inanition. Take the candle of death in your hand, and walk through the stately galleries of the world, and their splendid furniture and array are as the tinsel armour and pasteboard goblets of a penny theatre; fame is but an inscription on a grave, and glory the melancholy blazon on a coffin lid. We argue fiercely about happiness. One insists that she is found in the cottage which the hawthorn shades. Another that she is a lady of fashion, and treads on cloth of gold. Wisdom, listening to both, shakes a white head, and considers that "a good deal may be said on both sides."

There is a wise saying to the effect that "a man can eat no more than he can hold." Every man gets about the same satisfaction out of life. Mr. Suddlechops, the barber of Seven Dials, is as happy as Alexander at the head of his legions. The business of the one is to depopulate kingdoms, the business of the other to reap beards seven days old; but their relative positions do not affect the question. The one works with razors and soap-lather, the other with battle-cries and well-greaved Greeks. The one of a Saturday night counts up his shabby gains and grumbles; the other on *his*

Saturday night sits down and weeps for other worlds to conquer. The pence to Mr. Suddlechops are as important as are the worlds to Alexander. Every condition of life has its peculiar advantages, and wisdom points these out and is contented with them. The varlet who sang —

> "A king cannot swagger
> Or get drunk like a beggar,
> Nor be half so happy as I" —

had the soul of a philosopher in him. The harshness of the parlour is revenged at night in the servants' hall. The coarse rich man rates his domestic, but there is a thought in the domestic's brain, docile and respectful as he looks, which makes the matter equal, which would madden the rich man if he knew it — make him wince as with a shrewdest twinge of hereditary gout. For insult and degradation are not without their peculiar solaces. You may spit upon Shylock's gaberdine, but the day comes when he demands his pound of flesh; every blow, every insult, not without a certain satisfaction, he adds to the account running up against you in the day-book and ledger of his hate — which at the proper time he will ask you to discharge. Every way we look we see even-handed nature administering her laws of compensation. Grandeur has a heavy tax to pay. The usurper rolls along like a god, surrounded by his guards. He dazzles the crowd — all very fine; but look beneath his splendid trappings and you see a shirt of mail, and beneath *that* a heart cowering in terror of an air-drawn dagger. Whom did the memory of Austerlitz most keenly sting? The beaten emperor? or the mighty Napoleon, dying like an untended watch-fire on St. Helena?

Giddy people may think the life I lead here staid and humdrum, but they are mistaken. It is true, I hear no concerts, save those in which the thrushes are performers in the

spring mornings. I see no pictures, save those painted on the wide sky-canvas with the colours of sunrise and sunset. I attend neither rout nor ball; I have no deeper dissipation than the tea-table; I hear no more exciting scandal than quiet village gossip. Yet I enjoy my concerts more than I would the great London ones. I like the pictures I see, and think them better painted, too, than those which adorn the walls of the Royal Academy; and the village gossip is more after my turn of mind than the scandals that convulse the clubs. It is wonderful how the whole world reflects itself in the simple village life. The people around me are full of their own affairs and interests; were they of imperial magnitude, they could not be excited more strongly. Farmer Worthy is anxious about the next market; the likelihood of a fall in the price of butter and eggs hardly allows him to sleep o' nights. The village doctor — happily we have only one — skirrs hither and thither in his gig, as if man could neither die nor be born without his assistance. He is continually standing on the confines of existence, welcoming the new-comer, bidding farewell to the goer-away. And the robustious fellow who sits at the head of the table when the Jolly Swillers meet at the Blue Lion on Wednesday evenings is a great politician, sound of lung metal, and wields the village in the tap-room, as my Lord Palmerston wields the nation in the House. His listeners think him a wiser personage than the Premier, and he is inclined to lean to that opinion himself. I find everything here that other men find in the big world. London is but a magnified Dreamthorp.

And just as the Rev. Mr. White took note of the ongoings of the seasons in and around Hampshire Selborne, watched the colonies of the rooks in the tall elms, looked after the swallows in the cottage and rectory eaves, played the affectionate spy on the private lives of chaffinch and hedge-sparrow, was eavesdropper to the solitary cuckoo; so here I keep eye and

ear open; take note of man, woman, and child; find many a pregnant text imbedded in the commonplace of village life; and, out of what I see and hear, weave in my own room my essays as solitarily as the spider weaves his web in the dark ened corner. The essay, as a literary form, resembles the lyric, in so far as it is moulded by some central mood — whimsical, serious, or satirical. Give the mood, and the essay, from the first sentence to the last, grows around it as the cocoon grows around the silkworm. The essay-writer is a chartered libertine, and a law unto himself. A quick ear and eye, an ability to discern the infinite suggestiveness of common things, a brooding meditative spirit, are all that the essayist requires to start business with. Jacques, in "As You Like It," had the makings of a charming essayist. It is not the essayist's duty to inform, to build pathways through metaphysical morasses, to cancel abuses, any more than it is the duty of the poet to do these things. Incidentally he may do something in that way, just as the poet may, but it is not his duty, and should not be expected of him. Skylarks are primarily created to sing, although a whole choir of them may be baked in pies and brought to table; they were born to make music, although they may incidentally stay the pangs of vulgar hunger. The essayist is a kind of poet in prose, and if questioned harshly as to his uses, he might be unable to render a better apology for his existence than a flower might. The essay should be pure literature as the poem is pure literature. The essayist wears a lance, but he cares more for the sharpness of its point than for the pennon that flutters on it, than for the banner of the captain under whom he serves. He plays with death as Hamlet plays with Yorick's skull, and he reads the morals — strangely stern, often, for such fragrant lodging — which are folded up in the bosoms of roses. He has no pride, and is deficient in a sense of the congruity and fitness of things. He lifts a pebble from the ground,

and puts it aside more carefully than any gem; and on a nail in a cottage-door he will hang the mantle of his thought, heavily brocaded with the gold of rhetoric. He finds his way into the Elysian fields through portals the most shabby and commonplace.

The essayist plays with his subject, now in whimsical, now in grave, now in melancholy mood. He lies upon the idle grassy bank, like Jacques, letting the world flow past him, and from this thing and the other he extracts his mirth and his moralities. His main gift is an eye to discover the suggestiveness of common things; to find a sermon in the most unpromising texts. Beyond the vital hint, the first step, his discourses are not beholden to their titles. Let him take up the most trivial subject, and it will lead him away to the great questions over which the serious imagination loves to brood, — fortune, mutability, death, — just as inevitably as the runnel, trickling among the summer hills, on which sheep are bleating, leads you to the sea; or as, turning down the first street you come to in the city, you are led finally, albeit by many an intricacy, out into the open country, with its waste places and its woods, where you are lost in a sense of strangeness and solitariness. The world is to the meditative man what the mulberry plant is to the silkworm. The essay-writer has no lack of subject-matter. He has the day that is passing over his head; and, if unsatisfied with that, he has the world's six thousand years to depasture his gay or serious humour upon. I idle away my time here, and I am finding new subjects every hour. Everything I see or hear is an essay in bud. The world is everywhere whispering essays, and one need only be the world's amanuensis. The proverbial expression which last evening the clown dropped as he trudged homeward to supper, the light of the setting sun on his face, expands before me to a dozen pages. The coffin of the pauper, which to-day I saw carried carelessly

along, is as good a subject as the funeral procession of an emperor. Craped drum and banner add nothing to death; penury and disrespect take nothing away. Incontinently my thought moves like a slow-paced hearse with sable nodding plumes. Two rustic lovers, whispering between the darkening hedges, is as potent to project my mind into the tender passion as if I had seen Romeo touch the cheek of Juliet in the moonlight garden. Seeing a curly-headed child asleep in the sunshine before a cottage-door is sufficient excuse for a discourse on childhood; quite as good as if I had seen infant Cain asleep in the lap of Eve with Adam looking on. A lark cannot rise to heaven without raising as many thoughts as there are notes in its song. Dawn cannot pour its white light on my village without starting from their dim lair a hundred reminiscences; nor can sunset burn above yonder trees in the west without attracting to itself the melancholy of a life-time. When spring unfolds her green leaves I would be provoked to indite an essay on hope and youth, were it not that it is already writ in the carols of the birds; and I might be tempted in autumn to improve the occasion, were it not for the rustle of the withered leaves as I walk through the woods. Compared with that simple music, the saddest-cadenced words have but a shallow meaning.

The essayist who feeds his thoughts upon the segment of the world which surrounds him cannot avoid being an egotist; but then his egotism is not unpleasing. If he be without taint of boastfulness, of self-sufficiency, of hungry vanity, the world will not press the charge home. If a man discourses continually of his wines, his plate, his titled acquaintances, the number and quality of his horses, his men-servants and maid-servants, he must discourse very skilfully indeed if he escapes being called a coxcomb. If a man speaks of death — tells you that the idea of it continually haunts him, that he has the most insatiable curiosity as to death and dying,

that his thought mines in churchyards like a " demon-mole " — no one is specially offended, and that this is a dull fellow is the hardest thing likely to be said of him. Only the egotism that over-crows you is offensive, that exalts trifles and takes pleasure in them, that suggests superiority in matters of equipage and furniture; and the egotism is offensive, because it runs counter to and jostles your self-complacency. The egotism which rises no higher than the grave is of a solitary and a hermit kind — it crosses no man's path, it disturbs no man's *amour propre*. You may offend a man if you say you are as rich as he, as wise as he, as handsome as he. You offend no man if you tell him that, like him, you have to die. The king, in his crown and coronation robes, will allow the beggar to claim that relationship with him. To have to die is a distinction of which no man is proud. The speaking about one's self is not necessarily offensive. A modest, truthful man speaks better about himself than about anything else, and on that subject his speech is likely to be most profitable to his hearers. Certainly, there is no subject with which he is better acquainted, and on which he has a better title to be heard. And it is this egotism, this perpetual reference to self, in which the charm of the essayist resides. If a man is worth knowing at all, he is worth knowing well. The essayist gives you his thoughts, and lets you know, in addition, how he came by them. He has nothing to conceal; he throws open his doors and windows, and lets him enter who will. You like to walk round peculiar or important men as you like to walk round a building, to view it from different points, and in different lights. Of the essayist, when his mood is communicative, you obtain a full picture. You are made his contemporary and familiar friend. You enter into his humours and his seriousness. You are made heir of his whims, prejudices, and playfulness. You walk through the whole nature of him, as you walk through the streets of

Pompeii, looking into the interior of stately mansions, reading the satirical scribblings on the walls. And the essayist's habit of not only giving you his thoughts, but telling you how he came by them, is interesting, because it shows you by what alchemy the ruder world becomes transmuted into the finer. We like to know the lineage of ideas, just as we like to know the lineage of great earls and swift race-horses. We like to know that the discovery of the law of gravitation was born of the fall of an apple in an English garden on a summer afternoon. Essays written after this fashion are racy of the soil in which they grow, as you taste the lava in the vines grown on the slopes of Etna, they say. There is a healthy Gascon flavour in Montaigne's Essays; and Charles Lamb's are scented with the primroses of Covent Garden.

The essayist does not usually appear early in the literary history of a country; he comes naturally after the poet and the chronicler. His habit of mind is leisurely; he does not write from any special stress of passionate impulse; he does not create material so much as he comments upon material already existing. It is essential for him that books should have been written, and that they should, at least to some extent, have been read and digested. He is usually full of allusions and references, and these his reader must be able to follow and understand. And in this literary walk, as in most others, the giants came first: Montaigne and Lord Bacon were our earliest essayists, and, as yet, they are our best. In point of style, these essays are different from anything that could now be produced. Not only is the thinking different — the manner of setting forth the thinking is different also. We despair of reaching the thought, we despair equally of reaching the language. We can no more bring back their turns of sentence than we can bring back their tournaments. Montaigne, in his serious moods, has a curiously rich and intricate eloquence; and Bacon's

sentence bends beneath the weight of his thought, like a branch beneath the weight of its fruit. Bacon seems to have written his essays with Shakespeare's pen. There is a certain want of ease about the old writers which has an irresistible charm. The language flows like a stream over a pebbled bed, with propulsion, eddy, and sweet recoil — the pebbles, if retarding movement, giving ring and dimple to the surface, and breaking the whole into babbling music. There is a ceremoniousness in the mental habits of these ancients. Their intellectual garniture is picturesque, like the garniture of their bodies. Their thoughts are courtly and high mannered. A singular analogy exists between the personal attire of a period and its written style. The peaked beard, the starched collar, the quilted doublet, have their correspondences in the high sentence and elaborate ornament (worked upon the thought like figures upon tapestry) of Sidney and Spenser. In Pope's day men wore rapiers, and their weapons they carried with them into literature, and frequently unsheathed them too. They knew how to stab to the heart with an epigram. Style went out with the men who wore knee-breeches and buckles in their shoes. We write more easily now; but in our easy writing there is ever a taint of flippancy: our writing is to theirs, what shooting-coat and wide-awake are to doublet and plumed hat.

Montaigne and Bacon are our earliest and greatest essayists, and likeness and unlikeness exist between the men. Bacon was constitutionally the graver nature. He writes like one on whom presses the weight of affairs, and he approaches a subject always on its serious side. He does not play with it fantastically. He lives amongst great ideas, as with great nobles, with whom he dare not be too familiar. In the tone of his mind there is ever something imperial. When he writes on building, he speaks of a palace with spacious entrances, and courts, and banqueting-halls; when he writes

on gardens, he speaks of alleys and mounts, waste places and fountains, of a garden "which is indeed prince-like." To read over his table of contents, is like reading over a roll of peers' names. We have, taking them as they stand, essays treating *Of Great Place, Of Boldness, Of Goodness, and Goodness of Nature, Of Nobility, Of Seditions and Troubles, Of Atheism, Of Superstition, Of Travel, Of Empire, Of Counsel,* — a book plainly to lie in the closets of statesmen and princes, and designed to nurture the noblest natures. Bacon always seems to write with his ermine on. Montaigne was different from all this. His table of contents reads in comparison like a medley, or a catalogue of an auction. He was quite as wise as Bacon; he could look through men quite as clearly, and search them quite as narrowly; certain of his moods were quite as serious, and in one corner of his heart he kept a yet profounder melancholy; but he was volatile, a humorist, and a gossip. He could be dignified enough on great occasions, but dignity and great occasions bored him. He could stand in the presence with propriety enough, but then he got out of the presence as rapidly as possible. When, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, he — somewhat world-weary, and with more scars on his heart than he cared to discover — retired to his chateau, he placed his library "in the great tower overlooking the entrance to the court," and over the central rafter he inscribed in large letters the device — "I DO NOT UNDERSTAND; I PAUSE; I EXAMINE." When he began to write his Essays he had no great desire to shine as an author; he wrote simply to relieve teeming heart and brain. The best method to lay the spectres of the mind is to commit them to paper. Speaking of the Essays, he says, "This book has a domestic and private object. It is intended for the use of my relations and friends; so that, when they have lost me, which they will soon do, they may find in it some features of my condition

and humours; and by this means keep up more completely, and in a more lively manner, the knowledge they have of me." In his Essays he meant to portray himself, his habits, his modes of thought, his opinions, what fruit of wisdom he had gathered from experience sweet and bitter; and the task he has executed with wonderful fidelity. He does not make himself a hero. Cromwell would have his warts painted; and Montaigne paints his, and paints them too with a certain fondness. He is perfectly tolerant of himself and of everybody else. Whatever be the subject, the writing flows on, easy, equable, self-satisfied, almost always with a personal anecdote floating on the surface. Each event of his past life he considers a fact of nature; creditable or the reverse, there it is; sometimes to be speculated upon, not in the least to be regretted. If it is worth nothing else, it may be made the subject of an essay, or, at least, be useful as an illustration. We have not only his thoughts, we see also how and from what they arose. When he presents you with a bouquet, you notice that the flowers have been plucked up by the roots, and to the roots a portion of the soil still adheres. On his daily life his Essays grew like lichens upon rocks. If a thing is useful to him, he is not squeamish as to where he picks it up. In his eye there is nothing common or unclean; and he accepts a favour as willingly from a beggar as from a prince. When it serves his purpose, he quotes a tavern catch, or the smart saying of a kitchen wench, with as much relish as the fine sentiment of a classical poet, or the gallant *bon mot* of a king. Everything is important which relates to himself. That his mustache, if stroked with his perfumed glove, or handkerchief, will retain the odour a whole day, is related with as much gravity as the loss of a battle, or the march of a desolating plague. Montaigne, in his grave passages, reaches an eloquence intricate and highly wrought; but then his moods are Protean, and he is con-

stantly alternating his stateliness with familiarity, anecdote, humour, coarseness. His Essays are like a mythological landscape — you hear the pipe of Pan in the distance, the naked goddess moves past, the satyr leers from the thicket. At the core of him profoundly melancholy, and consumed by a hunger for truth, he stands like Prospero in the enchanted island, and he has Ariel and Caliban to do his behests and run his errands. Sudden alternations are very characteristic of him. Whatever he says suggests its opposite. He laughs at himself and his reader. He builds his castle of cards for the mere pleasure of knocking it down again. He is ever unexpected and surprising. And with this curious mental activity, this play and linked dance of discordant elements, his page is alive and restless, like the constant flicker of light and shadow in a mass of foliage which the wind is stirring.

Montaigne is avowedly an egotist; and by those who are inclined to make this a matter of reproach, it should be remembered that the value of egotism depends entirely on the egotist. If the egotist is weak, his egotism is worthless. If the egotist is strong, acute, full of distinctive character, his egotism is precious, and remains a possession of the race. If Shakespeare had left personal revelations, how we should value them; if, indeed, he has not in some sense left them — if the tragedies and comedies are not personal revelations altogether — the multiform nature of the man rushing toward the sun at once in Falstaff, Hamlet, and Romeo. But calling Montaigne an egotist does not go a great way to decipher him. No writer takes the reader so much into his confidence, and no one so entirely escapes the penalty of confidence. He tells us everything about himself, we think; and when all is told, it is astonishing how little we really know. The esplanades of Montaigne's palace are thoroughfares, men from every European country rub clothes there, but

somewhere in the building there is a secret room in which the master sits, of which no one but himself wears the key. We read in the Essays about his wife, his daughter, his daughter's governess, of his cook, his page, "who was never found guilty of telling the truth," of his library, the Gascon harvest out-side his chateau, his habits of composition, his favourite speculations; but somehow the man himself is constantly eluding us. His daughter's governess, his page, the ripening Gascon fields, are never introduced for their own sakes; they are employed to illustrate and set off the subject on which he happens to be writing. A brawl in his own kitchen he does not consider worthy of being specially set down, but he has seen and heard everything; it comes in his way when travelling in some remote region, and accordingly it finds a place. He is the frankest, most outspoken of writers; and that very frankness and outspokenness puts the reader off his guard. If you wish to preserve your secret, wrap it up in frankness. The Essays are full of this trick. The frankness is as well simulated as the grape-branches of the Grecian artist which the birds flew towards and pecked. When Montaigne retreats, he does so like a skilful general, leaving his fires burning. In other ways, too, he is an adept in putting his reader out. He discourses with the utmost gravity, but you suspect mockery or banter in his tones. He is serious with the most trifling subjects, and he trifles with the most serious. "He broods eternally over his own thought," but who can tell what his thought may be for the nonce? He is of all writers the most vagrant, surprising, and, to many minds, illogical. His sequences are not the sequences of other men. His writings are as full of transformations as a pantomine or a fairy tale. His arid wastes lead up to glittering palaces, his banqueting-halls end in a dog-hutch. He begins an essay about trivialities, and the conclusion is in the other world. And the peculiar character of his writing, like the peculiar

character of all writing which is worth anything, arises from constitutional turn of mind. He is constantly playing at fast and loose with himself and his reader. He mocks and scorns his deeper nature; and, like Shakespeare in Hamlet, says his deepest things in a jesting way. When he is gayest, be sure there is a serious design in his gaiety. Singularly shrewd and penetrating — sad, not only from sensibility of exquisite nerve and tissue, but from meditation, and an eye that pierced the surfaces of things — fond of pleasure, yet strangely fascinated by death — sceptical, yet clinging to what the Church taught and believed — lazily possessed by a high ideal of life, yet unable to reach it, careless perhaps often to strive after it, and with no very high opinion of his own goodness, or of the goodness of his fellows — and with all these serious elements, an element of humour mobile as flame, which assumed a variety of forms, now pure fun, now mischievous banter, now blistering scorn — humour in all its shapes, carelessly exercised on himself and his readers — with all this variety, complexity, riot, and contradiction almost of intellectual forces within, Montaigne wrote his bewildering Essays — with the exception of Rabelais, the greatest modern Frenchman — the creator of a distinct literary form, and to whom, down even to our own day, even in point of subject-matter, every essayist has been more or less indebted.

Bacon is the greatest of the serious and stately essayists, — Montaigne the greatest of the garrulous and communicative. The one gives you his thoughts on Death, Travel, Government, and the like, and lets you make the best of them; the other gives you his on the same subjects, but he wraps them up in personal gossip and reminiscence. With the last it is never Death or Travel alone; it is always Death one-fourth, and Montaigne three-fourths; or Travel one-fourth, and Montaigne three-fourths. He pours his thought

into the water of gossip, and gives you to drink. He gilds his pill always, and he always gilds it with himself. The general characteristics of his Essays have been indicated, and it is worth while inquiring what they teach, what positive good they have done, and why for three centuries they have charmed, and still continue to charm.

The Essays contain a philosophy of life, which is not specially high, yet which is certain to find acceptance more or less with men who have passed out beyond the glow of youth, and who have made trial of the actual world. The essence of his philosophy is a kind of cynical common sense. He will risk nothing in life; he will keep to the beaten track; he will not let passion blind or enslave him; he will gather round him what good he can, and will therewith endeavor to be content. He will be, as far as possible, self-sustained; he will not risk his happiness in the hands of man, or of woman either. He is shy of friendship, he fears love, for he knows that both are dangerous. He knows that life is full of bitters, and he holds it wisdom that a man should console himself, as far as possible, with its sweets, the principal of which are peace, travel, leisure, and the writing of essays. He values obtainable Gascon bread and cheese more than the unobtainable stars. He thinks crying for the moon the foolishest thing in the world. He will remain where he is. He will not deny that a new world may exist beyond the sunset, but he knows that to reach the new world there is a troublesome Atlantic to cross; and he is not in the least certain that, putting aside the chance of being drowned on the way, he will be one whit happier in the new world than he is in the old. For his part he will embark with no Columbus. He feels that life is but a sad thing at best; but as he has little hope of making it better, he accepts it, and will not make it worse by murmuring. When the chain galls him, he can at least revenge himself by making jests on it. He will temper the

despotism of nature by epigrams. He has read Æsop's fable, and is the last man in the world to relinquish the shabbiest substance to grasp at the finest shadow.

Of nothing under the sun was Montaigne quite certain, except that every man — whatever his station — might travel farther and fare worse; and that the playing with his own thoughts, in the shape of essay-writing, was the most harmless of amusements. His practical acquiescence in things does not promise much fruit, save to himself; yet in virtue of it he became one of the forces of the world — a very visible agent in bringing about the Europe which surrounds us to-day. He lived in the midst of the French religious wars. The rulers of his country were execrable Christians, but most orthodox Catholics. The burning of heretics was a public amusement, and the court ladies sat out the play. On the queen-mother and on her miserable son lay all the blood of the St. Bartholomew. The country was torn asunder; everywhere was battle, murder, pillage, and such woful partings as Mr. Millais has represented in his incomparable picture. To the solitary humorous essayist this state of things was hateful. He was a good Catholic in his easy way; he attended divine service regularly; he crossed himself when he yawned. He conformed in practice to every rule of the Church; but if orthodox in these matters, he was daring in speculation. There was nothing he was not bold enough to question. He waged war after his peculiar fashion with every form of superstition. He worked under the foundations of priestcraft. But while serving the Reformed cause, he had no sympathy with Reformers. If they would but remain quiet, but keep their peculiar notions to themselves, France would rest! That a man should go to the stake for an opinion, was as incomprehensible to him as that a priest or king should send him there for an opinion. He thought the persecuted and the persecutors fools about equally matched. He was

easy-tempered and humane — in the hunting-field he could not bear the cry of a dying hare with composure — martyr-burning had consequently no attraction for such a man. His scepticism came into play, his melancholy humour, his sense of the illimitable which surrounds man's life, and which mocks, defeats, flings back his thought upon himself. Man is here, he said, with bounded powers, with limited knowledge, with an unknown behind, an unknown in front, assured of nothing but that he was born, and that he must die; why, then, in Heaven's name should he burn his fellow for a difference of opinion in the matter of surplices, or as to the proper fashion of conducting devotion? Out of his scepticism and his merciful disposition grew, in that fiercely intolerant age, the idea of toleration, of which he was the apostle. Widely read, charming every one by his wit and wisdom, his influence spread from mind to mind, and assisted in bringing about the change which has taken place in European thought. His ideas, perhaps, did not spring from the highest sources. He was no ascetic, he loved pleasure, he was tolerant of everything except cruelty; but on that account we should not grudge him his meed. It is in this indirect way that great writers take their place among the forces of the world. In the long run, genius and wit side with the right cause. And the man fighting against wrong to-day is assisted, in a greater degree than perhaps he is himself aware, by the sarcasm of this writer, the metaphor of that, the song of the other, although the writers themselves professed indifference, or were even counted as belonging to the enemy.

Montaigne's hold on his readers arises from many causes. There is his frank and curious self-delineation; *that* interests, because it is the revelation of a very peculiar nature. Then there is the positive value of separate thoughts imbedded in his strange whimsicality and humor. Lastly, there is the perennial charm of style, which is never a separate

quality, but rather the amalgam and issue of all the mental and moral qualities in a man's possession, and which bears the same relation to these that light bears to the mingled elements that make up the orb of the sun. And style, after all, rather than thought, is the immortal thing in literature. In literature, the charm of style is indefinable, yet all-subduing, just as fine manners are in social life. In reality, it is not of so much consequence what you say, as how you say it. Memorable sentences are memorable on account of some single irradiating word. " But Shadwell never *deviates* into sense," for instance. Young Roscius, in his provincial barn, will repeat you the great soliloquy of Hamlet, and although every word may be given with tolerable correctness, you find it just as commonplace as himself; the great actor speaks it, and you " read Shakespeare as by a flash of lightning." And it is in Montaigne's style, in the strange freaks and turnings of his thought, his constant surprises, his curious alternations of humour and melancholy, his careless, familiar form of address, and the grace with which everything is done, that his charm lies, and which makes the hundredth perusal of him as pleasant as the first.

And on style depends the success of the essayist. Montaigne said the most familiar things in the finest way. Goldsmith could not be termed a thinker; but everything he touched he brightened, as after a month of dry weather, the shower brightens the dusty shrubbery of a suburban villa. The world is not so much in need of new thoughts as that when thought grows old and worn with usage it should, like current coin, be called in, and, from the mint of genius, reissued fresh and new. Love is an old story enough, but in every generation it is re-born, in the downcast eyes and blushes of young maidens. And so, although he fluttered in Eden, Cupid is young to-day. If Montaigne had lived in Dreamthorp, as I am now living, had he written essays as

I am now writing them, his English essays would have been as good as his Gascon ones. Looking on, the country cart would not for nothing have passed him on the road to market, the setting sun would be arrested in its splendid colors, the idle chimes of the church would be translated into a thoughtful music. As it is, the village life goes on, and there is no result. My sentences are not much more brilliant than the speeches of the clowns; in my book there is little more life than there is in the market-place on the days when there is no market.

ON THE ADVISABLENESS OF IMPROVING NATURAL KNOWLEDGE

THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY

This essay reflects the pride of nineteenth century science in its achievements. Thoughtful scientists like Huxley were not content with boasting of the triumphs won by their discoveries over material nature and of the comforts contributed by them to everyday life. The justification of science to such men was that it enormously enlarged the intellectual horizon of mankind and that it provided a securer foundation for conduct. The latter claim, indeed, was disputed, and became the occasion of burning controversy. Huxley was the foremost expounder of the religion of science, so called, and the deftness and force with which he handled his case are well exemplified in this essay. Having to lay before a popular audience a profound and unaccustomed conception of the significance of science, he makes his approach by a path over which his hearers can follow him intelligently and sympathetically. He chooses an illustration which has a lively meaning for any moderately well-informed Englishman and enables him to give concreteness to the idea of scientific progress. Having won attention and interest, and instilled the conviction of truth in the first part of his address, he has prepared the minds of his hearers to receive without a sense of shock the bolder and less expected claims which, with striking phrase and apt metaphor, he advances in the second half. He reveals throughout a mastery of persuasive expository technique in which his only rivals are Newman and Matthew Arnold. (The lecture was delivered in St. Martin's Hall, London, January 7, 1866, and printed in the *Fortnightly Review,* January 15, 1866. It was reprinted in *Methods and Results, Collected Essays,* Vol. V.)

ON THE ADVISABLENESS OF IMPROVING NATURAL KNOWLEDGE

THIS time two hundred years ago — in the beginning of January, 1666 — those of our forefathers who inhabited this great and ancient city, took breath between the shocks of two fearful calamities: one not quite past, although its fury had abated; the other to come.

Within a few yards of the very spot on which we are assembled, so the tradition runs, that painful and deadly malady, the plague, appeared in the latter months of 1664; and, though no new visitor, smote the people of England, and especially of her capital, with a violence unknown before, in the course of the following year. The hand of a master has pictured what happened in those dismal months; and in that truest of fictions, *The History of the Plague Year,* Defoe shows death, with every accompaniment of pain and terror, stalking through the narrow streets of old London, and changing their busy hum into a silence broken only by the wailing of the mourners of fifty thousand dead; by the woeful denunciations and mad prayers of fanatics; and by the madder yells of despairing profligates.

But, about this time in 1666, the death-rate had sunk to nearly its ordinary amount; a case of plague occurred only here and there, and the richer citizens who had flown from the pest had returned to their dwellings. The remnant of the people began to toil at the accustomed round of duty, or of pleasure; and the stream of city life bid fair to flow back along its old bed, with renewed and uninterrupted vigor.

The newly-kindled hope was deceitful. The great plague,

indeed, returned no more; but what it had done for the Londoners, the great fire, which broke out in the autumn of 1666, did for London; and, in September of that year, a heap of ashes and the indestructible energy of the people were all that remained of the glory of five-sixths of the city within the walls.

Our forefathers had their own ways of accounting for each of these calamities. They submitted to the plague in humility and in penitence, for they believed it to be the judgment of God. But, towards the fire they were furiously indignant, interpreting it as the effect of the malice of man, — as the work of the Republicans, or of the Papists, according as their prepossessions ran in favor of loyalty or of Puritanism.

It would, I fancy, have fared but ill with one who, standing where I now stand, in what was then a thickly-peopled and fashionable part of London, should have broached to our ancestors the doctrine which I now propound to you — that all their hypotheses were alike wrong; that the plague was no more, in their sense, Divine judgment, than the fire was the work of any political, or of any religious, sect; but that they were themselves the authors of both plague and fire, and that they must look to themselves to prevent the recurrence of calamities, to all appearance so peculiarly beyond the reach of human control — so evidently the result of the wrath of God, or of the craft and subtlety of an enemy.

And one may picture to one's self how harmoniously the holy cursing of the Puritan of that day would have chimed in with the unholy cursing and the crackling wit of the Rochesters and Sedleys, and with the revilings of the political fanatics, if my imaginary plain dealer had gone on to say that, if the return of such misfortunes were ever rendered impossible, it would not be in virtue of the victory of the

faith of Laud, or of that of Milton; and, as little, by the triumph of republicanism, as by that of monarchy. But that the one thing needful for compassing this end was, that the people of England should second the efforts of an insignificant corporation, the establishment of which, a few years before the epoch of the great plague and the great fire, had been as little noticed, as they were conspicuous.

Some twenty years before the outbreak of the plague a few calm and thoughtful students banded themselves together for the purpose, as they phrased it, of "improving natural knowledge." The ends they proposed to attain cannot be stated more clearly than in the words of one of the founders of the organization: —

"Our business was (precluding matters of theology and state affairs) to discourse and consider of philosophical enquiries, and such as related thereunto: — as Physick, Anatomy, Geometry, Astronomy, Navigation, Staticks, Magneticks, Chymicks, Mechanicks, and Natural Experiments; with the state of these studies and their cultivation at home and abroad. We then discoursed of the circulation of the blood, the valves in the veins, the venæ lacteæ, the lymphatic vessels, the Copernican hypothesis, the nature of comets and new stars, the satellites of Jupiter, the oval shape (as it then appeared) of Saturn, the spots on the sun and its turning on its own axis, the inequalities and selenography of the moon, the several phases of Venus and Mercury, the improvement of telescopes and grinding of glasses for that purpose, the weight of air, the possibility or impossibility of vacuities and nature's abhorrence thereof, the Torricellian experiment in quicksilver, the descent of heavy bodies and the degree of acceleration therein, with divers other things of like nature, some of which were then but new discoveries, and others not so generally known and embraced as now

they are; with other things appertaining to what hath been called the New Philosophy, which from the times of Galileo at Florence, and Sir Francis Bacon (Lord Verulam) in England, hath been much cultivated in Italy, France, Germany, and other parts abroad, as well as with us in England."

The learned Dr. Wallis, writing in 1696, narrates in these words what happened half a century before, or about 1645. The associates met at Oxford, in the rooms of Dr. Wilkins, who was destined to become a bishop; and subsequently coming together in London, they attracted the notice of the king. And it is a strange evidence of the taste for knowledge which the most obviously worthless of the Stuarts shared with his father and grandfather, that Charles the Second was not content with saying witty things about his philosophers, but did wise things with regard to them. For he not only bestowed upon them such attention as he could spare from his poodles and his mistresses, but, being in his usual state of impecuniosity, begged for them of the Duke of Ormond; and, that step being without effect, gave them Chelsea College, a charter, and a mace: crowning his favors in the best way they could be crowned, by burdening them no further with royal patronage or state interference.

Thus it was that the half-dozen young men, studious of the "New Philosophy," who met in one another's lodgings in Oxford or in London, in the middle of the seventeenth century, grew in numerical and in real strength, until, in its latter part, the "Royal Society for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge" had already become famous, and had acquired a claim upon the veneration of Englishmen, which it has ever since retained, as the principal focus of scientific activity in our islands, and the chief champion of the cause it was formed to support.

It was by the aid of the Royal Society that Newton published his *Principia*. If all the books in the world, except the

Philosophical Transactions, were destroyed, it is safe to say that the foundations of physical science would remain unshaken, and that the vast intellectual progress of the last two centuries would be largely, though incompletely, recorded. Nor have any signs of halting or of decrepitude manifested themselves in our own times. As in Dr. Wallis's days, so in these, " our business is, precluding theology and state affairs, to discourse and consider of philosophical inquiries." But our " Mathematick " is one which Newton would have to go to school to learn; our " Staticks, Mechanicks, Magneticks, Chymicks, and Natural Experiments " constitute a mass of physical and chemical knowledge, a glimpse at which would compensate Galileo for the doings of a score of inquisitorial cardinals; our " Physick " and " Anatomy " have embraced such infinite varieties of beings, have laid open such new worlds in time and space, have grappled, not unsuccessfully, with such complex problems, that the eyes of Vesalius and of Harvey might be dazzled by the sight of the tree that has grown out of their grain of mustard seed.

The fact is perhaps rather too much, than too little, forced upon one's notice, nowadays, that all this marvellous intellectual growth has a no less wonderful expression in practical life; and that, in this respect, if in no other, the movement symbolized by the progress of the Royal Society stands without a parallel in the history of mankind.

A series of volumes as bulky as the *Transactions of the Royal Society* might possibly be filled with the subtle speculations of the Schoolmen; not improbably, the obtaining a mastery over the products of mediæval thought might necessitate an even greater expenditure of time and of energy than the acquirement of the " New Philosophy " ; but though such work engrossed the best intellects of Europe for a longer time than has elapsed since the great fire, its

effects were "writ in water," so far as our social state is concerned.

On the other hand, if the noble first President of the Royal Society could revisit the upper air and once more gladden his eyes with a sight of the familiar mace, he would find himself in the midst of a material civilization more different from that of his day, than that of the seventeenth was from that of the first century. And if Lord Brouncker's native sagacity had not deserted his ghost, he would need no long reflection to discover that all these great ships, these railways, these telegraphs, these factories, these printing-presses, without which the whole fabric of modern English society would collapse into a mass of stagnant and starving pauperism, — that all these pillars of our State are but the ripples and the bubbles upon the surface of that great spiritual stream, the springs of which only, he and his fellows were privileged to see; and seeing, to recognize as that which it behooved them above all things to keep pure and undefiled.

It may not be too great a flight of imagination to conceive our noble *revenant* not forgetful of the great troubles of his own day, and anxious to know how often London had been burned down since his time, and how often the plague had carried off its thousands. He would have to learn that, although London contains tenfold the inflammable matter that it did in 1666; though, not content with filling our rooms with woodwork and light draperies, we must needs lead inflammable and explosive gases into every corner of our streets and houses, we never allow even a street to burn down. And if he asked how this had come about, we should have to explain that the improvement of natural knowledge has furnished us with dozens of machines for throwing water upon fires, any one of which would have furnished the ingenious Mr. Hooke, the first "curator and experimenter" of the Royal Society, with ample materials for discourse before

half a dozen meetings of that body; and that, to say truth, except for the progress of natural knowledge, we should not have been able to make even the tools by which these machines are constructed. And, further, it would be necessary to add, that although severe fires sometimes occur and inflict great damage, the loss is very generally compensated by societies, the operations of which have been rendered possible only by the progress of natural knowledge in the direction of mathematics, and the accumulation of wealth in virtue of other natural knowledge.

But the plague? My Lord Brouncker's observation would not, I fear, lead him to think that Englishmen of the nineteenth century are purer in life, or more fervent in religious faith, than the generation which could produce a Boyle, an Evelyn, and a Milton. He might find the mud of society at the bottom, instead of at the top, but I fear that the sum total would be as deserving of swift judgment as at the time of the Restoration. And it would be our duty to explain once more, and this time not without shame, that we have no reason to believe that it is the improvement of our faith, nor that of our morals, which keeps the plague from our city; but, again, that it is the improvement of our natural knowledge.

We have learned that pestilences will only take up their abode among those who have prepared unswept and ungarnished residences for them. Their cities must have narrow, unwatered streets, foul with accumulated garbage. Their houses must be ill-drained, ill-lighted, ill-ventilated. Their subjects must be ill-washed, ill-fed, ill-clothed. The London of 1665 was such a city. The cities of the East, where plague has an enduring dwelling, are such cities. We, in later times, have learned somewhat of Nature, and partly obey her. Because of this partial improvement of our natural knowledge and of that fractional obedience, we have no

plague; because that knowledge is still very imperfect and that obedience yet incomplete, typhoid is our companion and cholera our visitor. But it is not presumptuous to express the belief that, when our knowledge is more complete and our obedience the expression of our knowledge, London will count her centuries of freedom from typhoid and cholera, as she now gratefully reckons her two hundred years of ignorance of that plague which swooped upon her thrice in the first half of the seventeenth century.

Surely, there is nothing in these explanations which is not fully borne out by the facts? Surely, the principles involved in them are now admitted among the fixed beliefs of all thinking men? Surely, it is true that our countrymen are less subject to fire, famine, pestilence, and all the evils which result from a want of command over and due anticipation of the course of Nature, than were the countrymen of Milton; and health, wealth, and well-being are more abundant with us than with them? But no less certainly is the difference due to the improvement of our knowledge of Nature, and the extent to which that improved knowledge has been incorporated with the household words of men, and has supplied the springs of their daily actions.

Granting for a moment, then, the truth of that which the depreciators of natural knowledge are so fond of urging, that its improvement can only add to the resources of our material civilization; admitting it to be possible that the founders of the Royal Society themselves looked for no other reward than this, I cannot confess that I was guilty of exaggeration when I hinted, that to him who had the gift of distinguishing between prominent events and important events, the origin of a combined effort on the part of mankind to improve natural knowledge might have loomed larger than the Plague and have outshone the glare of the Fire; as

a something fraught with a wealth of beneficence to mankind, in comparison with which the damage done by those ghastly evils would shrink into insignificance.

It is very certain that for every victim slain by the plague, hundreds of mankind exist and find a fair share of happiness in the world by the aid of the spinning jenny. And the great fire, at its worst, could not have burned the supply of coal, the daily working of which, in the bowels of the earth, made possible by the steam pump, gives rise to an amount of wealth to which the millions lost in old London are but as an old song.

But spinning jenny and steam pump are, after all, but toys, possessing an accidental value; and natural knowledge creates multitudes of more subtle contrivances, the praises of which do not happen to be sung because they are not directly convertible into instruments for creating wealth. When I contemplate natural knowledge squandering such gifts among men, the only appropriate comparison I can find for her is, to liken her to such a peasant woman as one sees in the Alps, striding ever upward, heavily burdened, and with mind bent only on her home; but yet without effort and without thought, knitting for her children. Now stockings are good and comfortable things, and the children will undoubtedly be much the better for them; but surely it would be short-sighted, to say the least of it, to depreciate this toiling mother as a mere stocking-machine — a mere provider of physical comforts?

However, there are blind leaders of the blind, and not a few of them, who take this view of natural knowledge, and can see nothing in the bountiful mother of humanity but a sort of comfort-grinding machine. According to them, the improvement of natural knowledge always has been, and always must be, synonymous with no more than the improve-

ment of the material resources and the increase of the gratifications of men.

Natural knowledge is, in their eyes, no real mother of mankind, bringing them up with kindness, and, if need be, with sternness, in the way they should go, and instructing them in all things needful for their welfare; but a sort of fairy godmother, ready to furnish her pets with shoes of swiftness, swords of sharpness, and omnipotent Aladdin's lamps, so that they may have telegraphs to Saturn, and see the other side of the moon, and thank God they are better than their benighted ancestors.

If this talk were true, I, for one, should not greatly care to toil in the service of natural knowledge. I think I would just as soon be quietly chipping my own flint axe, after the manner of my forefathers a few thousand years back, as be troubled with the endless malady of thought which now infests us all, for such reward. But I venture to say that such views are contrary alike to reason and to fact. Those who discourse in such fashion seem to me to be so intent upon trying to see what is above Nature, or what is behind her, that they are blind to what stares them in the face in her.

I should not venture to speak thus strongly if my justification were not to be found in the simplest and most obvious facts, — if it needed more than an appeal to the most notorious truths to justify my assertion, that the improvement of natural knowledge, whatever direction it has taken, and however low the aims of those who may have commenced it — has not only conferred practical benefits on men, but, in so doing, has effected a revolution in their conceptions of the universe and of themselves, and has profoundly altered their modes of thinking and their views of right and wrong. I say that natural knowledge, seeking to satisfy natural wants, has found the ideas which can alone still spiritual cravings. I say that natural knowledge, in desiring to ascertain the

laws of comfort, has been driven to discover those of conduct, and to lay the foundations of a new morality.

Let us take these points separately; and first, what great ideas has natural knowledge introduced into men's minds?

I cannot but think that the foundations of all natural knowledge were laid when the reason of man first came face to face with the facts of Nature; when the savage first learned that the fingers of one hand are fewer than those of both; that it is shorter to cross a stream than to head it; that a stone stops where it is unless it be moved, and that it drops from the hand which lets it go; that light and heat come and go with the sun; that sticks burn away in a fire; that plants and animals grow and die; that if he struck his fellow savage a blow he would make him angry, and perhaps get a blow in return, while if he offered him a fruit he would please him, and perhaps receive a fish in exchange. When men had acquired this much knowledge, the outlines, rude though they were, of mathematics, of physics, of chemistry, of biology, of moral, economical, and political science, were sketched. Nor did the germ of religion fail when science began to bud. Listen to words which, though new, are yet three thousand years old: —

> ". . . When in heaven the stars about the moon
> Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid,
> And every height comes out, and jutting peak
> And valley, and the immeasurable heavens
> Break open to their highest, and all the stars
> Shine, and the shepherd gladdens in his heart." *

If the half savage Greek could share our feelings thus far, it is irrational to doubt that he went further, to find as we do, that upon that brief gladness there follows a certain sor-

* Need it be said that this is Tennyson's English for Homer's Greek?

row, — the little light of awakened human intelligence shines so mere a spark amidst the abyss of the unknown and unknowable; seems so insufficient to do more than illuminate the imperfections that cannot be remedied, the aspirations that cannot be realized, of man's own nature. But in this sadness, this consciousness of the limitation of man, this sense of an open secret which he cannot penetrate, lies the essence of all religion; and the attempt to embody it in the forms furnished by the intellect is the origin of the higher theologies.

Thus it seems impossible to imagine but that the foundations of all knowledge — secular or sacred — were laid when intelligence dawned, though the superstructure remained for long ages so slight and feeble as to be compatible with the existence of almost any general view respecting the mode of governance of the universe. No doubt, from the first, there were certain phenomena which, to the rudest mind, presented a constancy of occurrence, and suggested that a fixed order ruled, at any rate, among them. I doubt if the grossest of Fetish worshippers ever imagined that a stone must have a god within it to make it fall, or that a fruit had a god within it to make it taste sweet. With regard to such matters as these, it is hardly questionable that mankind from the first took strictly positive and scientific views.

But, with respect to all the less familiar occurrences which present themselves, uncultured man, no doubt, has always taken himself as the standard of comparison, as the centre and measure of the world; nor could he well avoid doing so. And finding that his apparently uncaused will has a powerful effect in giving rise to many occurrences, he naturally enough ascribed other and greater events to other and greater volitions, and came to look upon the world and all that therein is, as the product of the volitions of persons like himself, but stronger, and capable of being appeased or an-

gered, as he himself might be soothed or irritated. Through such conceptions of the plan and working of the universe all mankind have passed, or are passing. And we may now consider what has been the effect of the improvement of natural knowledge on the views of men who have reached this stage, and who have begun to cultivate natural knowledge with no desire but that of "increasing God's honor and bettering man's estate."

For example, what could seem wiser, from a mere material point of view, more innocent, from a theological one, to an ancient people, than that they should learn the exact succession of the seasons, as warnings for their husbandmen; or the position of the stars, as guides to their rude navigators? But what has grown out of this search for natural knowledge of so merely useful a character? You all know the reply. Astronomy, — which of all sciences has filled men's minds with general ideas of a character most foreign to their daily experience, and has, more than any other, rendered it impossible for them to accept the beliefs of their fathers. Astronomy, — which tells them that this so vast and seemingly solid earth is but an atom among atoms, whirling, no man knows whither, through illimitable space; which demonstrates that what we call the peaceful heaven above us, is but that space, filled by an infinitely subtle matter whose particles are seething and surging, like the waves of an angry sea; which opens up to us infinite regions where nothing is known, or ever seems to have been known, but matter and force, operating according to rigid rules; which leads us to contemplate phenomena the very nature of which demonstrates that they must have had a beginning, and that they must have an end, but the very nature of which also proves that the beginning was, to our conceptions of time, infinitely remote, and that the end is as immeasurably distant.

But it is not alone those who pursue astronomy who ask for bread and receive ideas. What more harmless than the attempt to lift and distribute water by pumping it; what more absolutely and grossly utilitarian? Yet out of pumps grew the discussions about Nature's abhorrence of a vacuum; and then it was discovered that Nature does not abhor a vacuum, but that air has weight; and that notion paved the way for the doctrine that all matter has weight, and that the force which produces weight is coextensive with the universe, — in short, to the theory of universal gravitation and endless force. While learning how to handle gases led to the discovery of oxygen, and to modern chemistry, and to the notion of the indestructibility of matter.

Again, what simpler, or more absolutely practical, than the attempt to keep the axle of a wheel from heating when the wheel turns around very fast? How useful for carters and gig drivers to know something about this; and how good were it, if any ingenious person would find out the cause of such phenomena, and thence educe a general remedy for them. Such an ingenious person was Count Rumford; and he and his successors have landed us in the theory of the persistence, or indestructibility, of force. And in the infinitely minute, as in the infinitely great, the seekers after natural knowledge of the kinds called physical and chemical, have everywhere found a definite order and succession of events which seem never to be infringed.

And how has it fared with "Physick" and Anatomy? Have the anatomist, the physiologist, or the physician, whose business it has been to devote themselves assiduously to that eminently practical and direct end, the alleviation of the sufferings of mankind, — have they been able to confine their vision more absolutely to the strictly useful? I fear they are the worst offenders of all. For if the astronomer has set before us the infinite magnitude of space, and the

practical eternity of the duration of the universe; if the physical and chemical philosophers have demonstrated the infinite minuteness of its constituent parts, and the practical eternity of matter and of force; and if both have alike proclaimed the universality of a definite and predicable order and succession of events, the workers in biology have not only accepted all these, but have added more startling theses of their own. For, as the astronomers discover in the earth no centre of the universe, but an eccentric speck, so the naturalists find man to be no centre of the living world, but one amidst endless modifications of life; and as the astronomer observes the mark of practicality endless time set upon the arrangements of the solar system, so the student of life finds the records of ancient forms of existence peopling the world for ages, which, in relation to human experience, are infinite.

Furthermore, the physiologist finds life to be as dependent for its manifestation on particular molecular arrangements as any physical or chemical phenomenon; and wherever he extends his researches, fixed order and unchanging causation reveal themselves, as plainly as in the rest of Nature.

Nor can I find that any other fate has awaited the germ of Religion. Arising, like all other kinds of knowledge, out of the action and interaction of man's mind, with that which is not man's mind, it has taken the intellectual coverings of Fetishism or Polytheism; of Theism or Atheism; of Superstition or Rationalism. With these, and their relative merits and demerits, I have nothing to do; but this it is needful for my purpose to say, that if the religion of the present differs from that of the past, it is because the theology of the present has become more scientific than that of the past; because it has not only renounced idols of wood and idols of stone, but begins to see the necessity of breaking in pieces the idols built up of books and traditions and fine-spun ecclesiastical

cobwebs: and of cherishing the noblest and most human of man's emotions, by worship " for the most part of the silent sort " at the Altar of the Unknown.

Such are a few of the new conceptions implanted in our minds by the improvement of natural knowledge. Men have acquired the ideas of the practically infinite extent of the universe and of its practical eternity; they are familiar with the conception that our earth is but an infinitesimal fragment of that part of the universe which can be seen; and that, nevertheless, its duration is, as compared with our standards of time, infinite. They have further acquired the idea that man is but one of innumerable forms of life now existing on the globe, and that the present existences are but the last of an immeasurable series of predecessors. Moreover, every step they have made in natural knowledge has tended to extend and rivet in their minds the conception of a definite order of the universe — which is embodied in what are called, by an unhappy metaphor, the laws of Nature — and to narrow the range and loosen the force of men's belief in spontaneity, or in changes other than such as arise out of that definite order itself.

Whether these ideas are well or ill founded is not the question. No one can deny that they exist, and have been the inevitable outgrowth of the improvement of natural knowledge. And if so, it cannot be doubted that they are changing the form of men's most cherished and most important convictions.

And as regards the second point — the extent to which the improvement of natural knowledge has remodeled and altered what may be termed the intellectual ethics of men, — what are among the moral convictions most fondly held by barbarous and semi-barbarous people?

They are the convictions that authority is the soundest basis of belief; that merit attaches to a readiness to believe;

that the doubting disposition is a bad one, and scepticism a sin; that when good authority has pronounced what is to be believed, and faith has accepted it, reason has no further duty. There are many excellent persons who yet hold by these principles, and it is not my present business, or intention, to discuss their views. All I wish to bring clearly before your minds is the unquestionable fact, that the improvement of natural knowledge is effected by methods which directly give the lie to all these convictions, and assume the exact reverse of each to be true.

The improver of natural knowledge absolutely refuses to acknowledge authority, as such. For him, scepticism is the highest of duties; blind faith the one unpardonable sin. And it cannot be otherwise, for every great advance in natural knowledge has involved the absolute rejection of authority, the cherishing of the keenest scepticism, the annihilation of the spirit of blind faith; and the most ardent votary of science holds his firmest convictions, not because the men he most venerates hold them; not because their verity is testified by portents and wonders; but because his experience teaches him that whenever he chooses to bring these convictions into contact with their primary source, Nature — whenever he thinks fit to test them by appealing to experiment and to observation — Nature will confirm them. The man of science has learned to believe in justification, not by faith, but by verification.

Thus, without for a moment pretending to despise the practical results of improvement of natural knowledge, and its beneficial influence on material civilization, it must, I think, be admitted that the great ideas, some of which I have indicated, and the ethical spirit which I have endeavored to sketch, in the few moments which remained at my disposal, constitute the real and permanent significance of natural knowledge.

If these ideas be destined, as I believe they are, to be more

and more firmly established as the world grows older; if that spirit be fated, as I believe it is, to extend itself into all departments of human thought, and to become co-extensive with the range of knowledge; if, as our race approaches its maturity, it discovers, as I believe it will, that there is but one kind of knowledge and but one method of acquiring it; then we, who are still children, may justly feel it our highest duty to recognize the advisableness of improving natural knowledge, and so to aid ourselves and our successors in our course towards the noble goal which lies before mankind.

A CYNIC'S APOLOGY

LESLIE STEPHEN

The literary fame of Sir Leslie Stephen rests on his numerous biographical writings and his studies of rationalistic thought in England. He represents a generation which broke away completely from the doctrines of the Anglican church but held strongly to its ethical outlook. The rationalistic nature of his own mind is apparent in *A Cynic's Apology*. For though the essay is playful in style, there is no mistaking the seriousness of its intention. He goes about the game with perfect good temper and even with a kind of dashing indifference; but under cover of the lightly mocking humor and ironic banter, he delivers some of the deadliest thrusts against cant and humbug and hypocrisy. The sober good sense is as noticeable in this essay as his good humor, and his mental complexion is well set off by the colloquial ease and vivacity of his writing. (The essay appeared in *The Cornhill Magazine*, May, 1869.)

A CYNIC'S APOLOGY

THERE are certain outcasts of humanity — pariahs to whom the most benevolent of mankind refuse to extend a helping hand — misshapen cripples in soul, who are displayed by some cruel demonstrator, like specimens in bottles at a medical museum, to illustrate the disastrous consequences of grievous moral disease; — and of these unfortunates I confess myself to be one. I seldom enter a church, or attend a public meeting, without hearing myself held up to execration — not by name, but by reputation — as the heartless cynic, the man who sits in the seat of the scorner, or the rightful owner of some other opprobrious title drawn from profane or sacred sources. In short, I am a person given to rather dyspeptic views of things, inclined to look at the seamy side of the world, and much more ready to laugh at a new actor than to go wild with enthusiasm over his performance. Now I freely admit that for the most part the preachers are perfectly right. Undoubtedly enthusiasm is the most essential of all qualities, if not the one thing needful. It prevents the world from sinking into a stagnant and putrefying pool. We could not improve, nor even remain in a stationary position without it. And, what is more, the preachers are justified in giving a rather exaggerated prominence to the enthusiastic view of life; for mankind is much more in want of the spur than of the curb. Let them encourage any number of young St. Georges to mount and ride forth in search of a dragon; for though in real life the dragon breed is probably extinct since the days of the pterodactyle, it will be some time before we shall want game-laws to pro-

tect dragons of the metaphorical kind, or be able to dispense with the services of any St. George that may enlist. Yet, after all, there is another side of things which we may sometimes remember when we are beyond the charmed circle of pulpit eloquence. A clergyman does well to insist chiefly upon the necessity of self-denial; but it does not follow that we should never have a taste of cakes and ale. As, indeed, we are ready enough for the most part to take our meals regularly without special encouragement, our teachers do not insist upon the necessity of our eating and drinking and indulging in an occasional festivity. They trust to the unaided propensities of our nature to secure the proper discharge of those functions, and are content to throw their whole weight upon the side of restraining our excesses. For a similar reason, I presume, we are never told that we ought sometimes to laugh at our neighbours, to throw cold water upon their zeal, and to pick holes in their favourite little projects for the reform of humanity. It is imagined that that duty may be safely left to the unprompted malevolence of our nature, of which it is presumed that there will be a sufficient crop after every diligence has been used in pruning it down. Now here, I venture to suggest, there is an omission in the common run of exhortation. There is, as I shall try to prove, a certain useful piece of work to be done, and if we are content simply to denounce those who do it, it will, of course, be done in a bad spirit and from malevolent motives. I claim no lofty mission for the cynic; and I merely suggest that, like mosquitoes, they are part of the economy of nature. One of Lincoln's apologues — of which the original application matters little — told how he and his brother were once ploughing on a Kentucky farm: the horse was going at an unusually good pace, when Lincoln knocked off a huge " chin-fly " that was fastened to his hide. " What did you do that for? " exclaimed his brother. " That's all that

made him go." The whole of my claim for cynics is that they act at times the part of "chin-fly", on the pachydermatous population of the world. If we rashly attempt to crush them out of existence, we only make them more spiteful than before, and may not improbably discover that, like other vermin, they do some dirty work, which is not the less essential to our comfort. The most ingenious of the socialist theorizers maintained that men who did particularly unpleasant services to mankind, should be rewarded by being held in special honour, instead of being shunned as is usual in our imperfect society. Scavengers and chimney sweeps, for example, would have some compensation for groping in filth by occupying at other times the best seats in public places. I do not go so far as this. I am content to be trodden under foot (in spirit only) by innumerable preachers — and perhaps it does not want much courage to bear the satire of ordinary sermons; they may spit upon my garberdine, and call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog, as much as they like. I shall never desire to cut off a pound of their flesh; I would, at most, retaliate, like poor old Shylock, by some harmless abuse, and invite them, not (as I might) to be grateful, but to remember that I too, like venomous reptiles, have a certain place in the world. To explain this a little more in detail, let us consider one or two particular cases. Thus, for example, every one who has reached a certain time of life has been annoyed by a peculiar race, known amongst its own members as the "earnest," and to the rest of mankind as prigs. It is notoriously difficult even for naturalists to trace out the identity of certain creatures who vary very much at different stages of their development. A man who remembers the companions of his university career is sometimes amazed at the number of enthusiastic clergymen and respectable lawyers who at a later period claim to have been among his contemporaries, and wonders from what new ma-

terial this finished product has been constructed. Gradually he finds that a stout boating-man, whose talk was of bumping, and whose food was of bleeding beefsteak, has fined down into an ascetic priest; or that a cadaverous mathematical student has blossomed into a rubicund lawyer. Now the case of the prig is the reverse of this. He is a specimen of arrested development. Instead of being modified by the atmosphere of the outside world, he has carried into it all the simplicity characteristic of his earliest manhood. There is something refreshing and even elevating about the spectacle of these harmless enthusiasts. They carry us back to the time when the sight of our names in a class-list produced a feeling of ineffable pride, and a fellowship seemed more glorious than a seat in the Cabinet. There is upon this earth no person who surveys mankind "from China to Peru" with a more exquisite sense of perfect complacency than the young gentleman who has just put on his bachelor's hood. Early donhood, if I may so call it, is the time of life at which nature assists us by throwing out an abnormal development of self-esteem, as the marmot grows fat to strengthen him against the approach of winter. The Union is still to our minds an assembly whose debates reverberate throughout the empire; to row in the university eight is an honour worth the sacrifice certainly of learning, and possibly even of health; to be a first-class man is to have won a decisive success in the battle of life. In the little world to which our ambition has hitherto been confined, we have risen to the summit of all things; for tutors, professors, and other authorities are nothing but contemptible old fogies hide-bound with useless pedantry. So imposing, indeed, is the position of the youth who has just won high honours, that I confess that I have never been able to meet as an equal those who attained that position when I was a freshman. Thackeray speaks of the old gentleman of seventy who still shuddered

at the dream of being flogged by the terrible head-master of his youth. In my imagination, the lads who held sway in the university when I first had the honour of a gown, and who, as we fondly believed, rivalled, in different departments, Porson and Sir Isaac Newton, and Pitt, and Coleridge, and Byron, are still surrounded by a glory exceeding that of any of the sons of men. But a cynical freshman would be an impossible creature.

Most men soon part with their university bloom: the world demolishes their splendid ideal, and even Oxford and Cambridge sink to provincial towns with a large proportion of cultivated men and promising lads; but not enchanted palaces of virtue and learning. The senior wrangler himself walks down the Strand without attracting a crowd; and a benighted metropolis has rather hazy notions of the precise meaning of triposes and littlegoes. Yet there are a happy few who carry about with them to later life the rose-coloured atmosphere which first gathered round them in the walks of Trinity or Christchurch, and retain the estimate then formed of the outer world of barbarians. These are the genuine prigs; and as live and let live is a very good, though very trite motto, I have no objection to their existence. They would not voluntarily hurt my feelings; and indeed the really irritating thing about them is their invariable condescension. They have the art of posing themselves like monumental statues on invisible pedestals which they carry about with them. They are sincerely anxious to put us at our ease. They smile benevolently at any little criticisms which we may hazard, as one smiles at the infantile prattle of children. They have a mission, of which they are perfectly conscious, and they move in a light not vouchsafed to the horny eyes of a cynic. But they feel deeply that their ineffable superiority does not entitle them to be harsh with us. They have even been known to approve an occasional

joke, though never condescending to make one themselves; they deal gently but firmly with us; and after we have amused ourselves with our playthings, bring us back to the discussion of a serious subject. If the conversation strays, for example, to some mere personal gossip, they take advantage of the first accidental loophole to ask our opinion of the merits of female suffrage, or the prospects of trades-unionism. On woman's rights they are especially strong — it may be from a natural sense of gratitude; for women, as natural haters of cynicisms and inclined to sentiment, are generally far more tolerant of priggishness than men. Perhaps, too, there is something pleasant to the feminine imagination in the air of infallibility which these excellent beings affect; for they are apt to gather into cliques, and round private prophets, of whom to confess ignorance is to confess yourself one of the profane. This gives them that great advantage which belongs to the esoteric disciples of a narrow sect — the power of forming mutual admiration societies. A great, though unintentional, service has been done them by an eloquent writer, as far as possible removed from their weaknesses, in popularizing the nickname Philistine. Like other nicknames, that word has degenerated in common use, till it is sometimes a mere shibboleth, employed by the genuine prig to designate all who are not prigs. Not but that the two characters may be sometimes reconciled in that truly portentous variety of the prig who founds his claim to superiority on the exclusive possession of the true doctrine about the currency, or the checks and balances of the British constitution. But, as a rule, to do him justice, the prig chooses for his pet doctrine some less husky and indigestible fragment of truth.

To object to such persons in their youth would be morose; though even then the phase is not without its dangers. It implies a consciousness — which may frequently be well

founded — of great powers, and a rather overweening estimate of their importance. It is useful, we may say, as the yolk which surrounds a bird before it has left the egg — on condition that it is thoroughly absorbed. When the day-dreams of the youth begin to turn into the settled delusion of the man, they first show their enervating influence. To eradicate these delusions requires that treatment with some biting social acids which cynics are destined by nature to secrete. The youthful enthusiast who has not undergone some such hardening process suffers from a sort of fatty degeneration of the moral nature. He exhibits that insipid flabby sentimentalism which does more than anything to disgust reasonable men with philanthropy. It is, doubtless, a thousand pities that any one should be disgusted with so essential a virtue: but how is it to be avoided? A man who is capable of deep emotion at the mass of misery which still stagnates in the world, who is anxious for stern and sharp remedies well considered and vigorously carried into execution, is thrust aside by the crowd of amiable quacks who are occupied in puffing themselves and their pet nostrums. The cliques — each of which possesses, in its own estimation, the one panacea for curing all our evils — form, as it were, a series of social hothouses, in which philanthropists are forced, like early peas, to an unhealthy precocity of growth. They shoot up into prize specimens, intensely admired by those who have carefully cultivated them, and manured them with compliment and applause, but of weak fibre and feeble constitution. If you venture to criticize one of these gushing and feminine creatures, you are accused of harshness, brutality, and indifference to the finer feelings of our nature. You are a coarse cynic, and probably a sceptic into the bargain; your impatience of schemes than won't work, and of feeble attempts to varnish decayed places instead of curing them, is considered to imply indifference to the end desired. It is

easy to set down the contempt of practical men for half the charitable schemes of the day to a grovelling selfishness. Much of it may be so; but it only needs a glance at the chaotic muddle of the London charities, to see the advantage that would result if people would look before they leap, and take a lesson or two from the scorners and sneerers. Doing good requires forethought as well as other things; and the fashionable denunciation of cynicism has tended to deprive us of the benefits of all criticism. People are so charmed with the romantic aspect of things that they won't look at the prosaic, commonplace aspect of the evils to be encountered. To say the truth, one is occasionally inclined to regret that martyrdom has gone out of fashion. Doubtless it was wrong to saw an apostle in two; but the practice had its advantages. It forced social reformers into a sterner temper, and a more thorough-going policy, and discouraged the crowd of thoughtless volunteers, who hinder the work they profess to help. The word, indeed, remains, but its whole signification is altered. Two of the most desirable events in life are, to be suppressed by Act of Parliament or to become a martyr. In one case, you are left with a good income and nothing to do; in the other, you are the object of universal sympathy, and may very probably receive even pecuniary compensation. When stakes and faggots were in vogue, there were objections to the honour; but now it would be hard to show a man a more delicate attention than to prosecute him for heresy, whether theological, political, or even scientific, for he is certain to become a "lion," and not improbably the pet of some enthusiastic clique.

As this moral tonic has gone out of use, the critic's sneer is, perhaps, the best substitute left. It may do something to clear the atmosphere of cant, and to strip the prig of his inordinate affectations. By itself it can, indeed, do nothing; but it gets rid of some of the constantly accumulating masses

of humbug, and allows us at least to see things as they are. To the objection that it is cruel, the answer is that it can hardly hold the existing evils in check. The unfounded superstition that brutal critics of a former day slew Keats by their abuse has long been worn out, and is scarcely even quoted more than once a week or so. We may say, in Rosalind's words, " men have died, and worms have eaten them " — but not of criticism. Persons who talk of the ferocity of the most fabulous creature known as the slashing critic, must indulge in some very erroneous estimates of the amount of genius in this country. A hasty calculation may be easily made. Compare the number of novelists of established reputation with the swarms of aspirants, whose first efforts are criticized in nearly every paper we take up, and then compare the number of favourable and unfavourable judgments. A rule of three will result, which would prove either that we are now turning out rivals to Fielding, or Scott, or Thackeray with unprecedented rapidity, or that many respectable writers are being welcomed with an excess of compliment. It is only too easy to say which is the most probable alternative. Or we may compare the number of living authors of recognized ability, who struggled against critics in their youth — if any such can be named — with the number who have been hopelessly spoilt by undue praise. At every turn we find really clever novelists, poets, and artists who have made a hit on their first attempt, and have ever since been their own servile imitators. It is of the rarest occurrence now to find one who has been exposed to the opposite and less searching trial of hostility, or even want of recognition. Unless a man wilfully plunges into some abstruse branch of inquiry, some thorny byway of metaphysical or historical inquiry, he is in especially greater danger from the excess than the deficiency of sympathy. A patron, we know, in Dr. Johnson's time, was " one who looked with unconcern on a

man struggling for life in the water, and when he had reached ground, encumbered him with help." The public, we are told, has taken the place of patron and discharges it in very different fashion. It has innumerable critics placed, like the Humane Society's men on the Serpentine, with ample provision of hooks, ropes, and grapples. On the first appearance of a swimmer of any buoyancy, he is seized, hauled on shore, patted on the back, applauded, petted, treated to drinks, supplied with funds, and generally made into an idol with all the questionable advantages of such a position. If some poor critic comes by and says, " Really that young man is an impostor," he is hooted at as a cynic whose only motive must be an unworthy jealousy. And yet there are impostors — if we may imitate Galileo's profession of faith. Nay, so far is criticism from damaging genuine talent, that even an impostor, if endowed with sufficient impudence, can thrive and wax fat and sell innumerable editions in the teeth of his scorners. All that the critic can hope to do is to keep alive the belief that there is some distinction between good writing and bad, and to encourage public opinion occasionally to assert its independence. It is an encouraging fact that by incessantly hammering at the point, sensation novelists have been forced to put forward a defence. Critics are totally unable to crush the faults of which they complain, but they can maintain a certain sensibility to blame. It is still known by tradition that there are some canons of good taste, which a man may indeed safely defy so far as his bookseller's account is concerned, but which will avenge themselves on his future fame. If the tradition does not quite expire, it is due to a few faithful critics — much reviled by the enthusiastic part of mankind — who go about smiting pretenders right and left; and, it may be, sometimes administering a random blow to some one who does not deserve it.

The enthusiasts, who think that revolutions are to be made with rosewater, that the world is to be awed by patting all the good boys on the head without administering the birch to the bad ones, may possibly object to this doctrine. It sounds plausible to say, praise the good and let the bad find its own path to decay. Yet even they will perhaps admit some force in the next claim which I venture to put forward. There are in this world certain persons known by the good old English name of fools. Although we shrink from applying the name to any individual, we know that, in the aggregate, they form a vast and almost impenetrable phalanx. Like other men, they have their uses; they serve, perhaps, as ballast, and prevent the machinery of the world from moving too fast. Certainly they do it effectually. There is something portentous about the huge masses of dogged stupidity which environ us on every side. There are noodles alive who repeat with infinite variations the oration composed for them by Sydney Smith, and repeat their little saws about the wisdom of our ancestors, the contrast between theory and practice, and other profound considerations leading up to the grand conclusion, *Nolumus leges Angliae mutari.** It may be that some of the finest specimens of the tribe were those who lately engaged in the defense of the worst abuses in workhouses, and happily compared all who denounced them to persons with a morbid appetite for "putrid oysters." The force of the analogy may not be very obvious, but it had a certain currency at the time from the happy confusion of ideas which it indicated. Vestrymen, as this scrap of their eloquence implies, are frequently dull; and it may even be that their education gives them a dullness of a peculiarly fine flavour. But we cannot flatter ourselves that dullness is confined to Bumbledom, nor to its unfortunate subjects. There is, we may venture to imagine,

* [We do not wish the laws of England to be changed.]

some stupidity in high places; and if any doubts be entertained on the subject, we might ask Mr. Mill for his opinion of Conservative members of Parliament, or Mr. Bright for his views of bishops. Assuming that those eminent men cannot be speaking entirely without book, and noting, for our private edification, the singular resemblance between the two sides of the House of Commons, and the fact that lawn sleeves do not naturally change human nature, we may venture to hazard a conjecture that there is probably a good deal of stupidity up and down the country. How is it to be assaulted with any prospect of success? The thick armour which Providence has bestowed upon this class of mankind is proverbial. Take it for a rule, as the poet observes,

No creature smarts so little as a fool.

But if anything is to be done, he must be made to smart. Some one must do for him that kind office which had to be done for the mediæval knight who had been tumbled over in his impregnable suit of armour, and force open the rivets. Where is his vulnerable place? Preaching, however eloquent, passes over him like a distant pleasant murmur. He plants himself more firmly in his seat, and refuses to budge. He is like a huge wrestler whom I have seen wearing down his active antagonist by sheer weight. If he moved, he was thrown in an instant; but so long as he stood stolidly stock-still no efforts were of the slightest use. We want some one to stir him up as the Spanish bull is excited by a firework or two planted in his neck. Now, fortunately, the very dullest of mortals is more or less accessible to contempt. He dislikes being written down an ass. He throws off his mantle of sevenfold indifference under a few judicious taunts, and brings his clumsy strength into the arena. It is curious to remark how, in a political contest, the loftiest eloquence loses its effect after a day or two; and some little epigram

thrown out in the heat of the contest remains fizzing and sparkling unquenchably, in spite of all efforts to stamp it out, and keeps up the spirit of the weary combatants. Keen, scornful common sense, compressed into a few pungent words, piercing through the buncombe and the flummery, should be welcomed even by those it attacks. It is the signal that the parade of the fencer with blunted foils is over, and that real work with sharp steel is beginning.

But it may be urged this is, after all, a debasing view of things. Cynics who delight to pierce windbags and to unmask humbugs, are equally apt to throw mud at heroes. Even if the hero laughs at them, the popular mind is prejudiced. If, in those old days of dragons and martyrs, there had been such things as newspaper reporters and weekly essayists, what kind of criticism would have greeted men who died in the discharge of the noblest of duties? Or suppose that even now some gallant missionary has been devoured in the Cannibal Islands, and that the court journalist of that country has managed to catch something of the European tone. "The news which has just come to us," he would perhaps say, "is certainly to be lamented. Cannibalism, as a custom, is undoubtedly doomed, though we may regret the sentimentality which has finally suppressed so picturesque and harmless a custom. Be that as it may, we have become too dainty to eat our enemies, though not too dainty to kill them; we have sacrificed to morbid prejudices a savoury and nutritious article of diet; and, of course, laws, however unsatisfactory in point of reason, must be obeyed. Even missionaries who land upon our shores must be protected. But we would ask them, if they still retain any gleams of common sense, what it is that they expect to gain? Mumbo Jumbo may not be in all respects a satisfactory object of worship; but what known doctrine is thoroughly satisfactory? His worshippers believe that if they knock

each other on the head, or marry more than a dozen wives, or eat human flesh out of season, they will suffer for it; it is a rough creed containing, it may be, some errors; but, on the whole, it is excellently adapted to the state of civilization, and any more refined doctrines would simply fly over the people's heads. Mumbo Jumbo's priests are not men of any high polish, but they have a great influence over the vulgar, and save some expense in police arrangements. The man who upsets such a state of things, incurs a heavy responsibility, and ought to be perfectly clear that his teaching will be better adapted to the minds of his audience. If he is fool enough for the sake of so doubtful a good, to run the risk of being made into chops, we are of course bound, as far as may be, to frustrate his excellent intention, and to prevent him from obtaining the object of his foolish wishes. So far as we can secure it by reasonable precautions, his friends shall not boast that he has been converted into meat, roast, boiled, or baked; but if we unluckily fail, they must also thoroughly understand that we hold him to be simply an idiot whose folly has met with its natural, if not its lawful reward."

In some such tone, I imagine, we should greet many martyrdoms nowadays: and I fully admit that it is only within narrow bounds, only when acting as a strictly subordinate check, that cynicism is desirable or pardonable. Mustard is a good thing, but we cannot dine off it; and there are, undoubtedly, limits to the use of vitriol. When chivalry is sneered away, there is a fearful loss to the people whose powers of reverence are injured; only at present I fear it is in equal danger of being stifled by injudicious praise, and lost from sight in a mass of Brummagem imitations. A little supply of cynicism should be kept on hand to test the genuine nature of the article. Let us only reflect, to use one obvious illustration, how much good would be done if in

every church there came in at sermon-time the cynic who is so often denounced in his absence; if he was accommodated with a seat, and allowed to put the clergyman a few questions afterwards in private: would not the logic to which we are treated be generally sounder, the eloquence more severe, and a little more care be shown not to shelter sheer nonsense under the respect due to sacred things? We should, I fancy, more frequently enjoy what, in spite of all that is said against sermons, is really one of the most elevating of all possible influences, the eloquence of a man who has put the whole powers of his mind to enforce doctrines of whose truth and vital importance he is even passionately convinced, and who further remembers that he is talking to men as well as to children.

CHARLES LAMB

WALTER PATER

Walter Pater is one of the most notable English masters in the art of the appreciative essay. It is an art which depends upon the gift of imaginative apprehension and it attains its greatest success when there is a temperamental accord between the writer and his subject. Indeed, an appreciative essay often reveals more about the writer of the appreciation than about the work of art or the artist that inspires him, inasmuch as each reader tends to find that in a work which has a special sympathy with his own nature, which answers to his particular intellectual and aesthetic demands. In Pater an impressionableness to subtle gradations in moods and a sensibility to the shadings of literary expression are some of the qualities that make him a felicitous interpreter of Lamb. The natural grace, the spontaneous oddity of Lamb, are scarcely reflected in the mirror of Pater's elaborate and somewhat labored composition, which is better fitted to give back an image of his grave and melancholy features than of the bright and lively flashings of his fancy and humor. (The essay appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*, October, 1878, and was reprinted in *Appreciations*, 1889.)

CHARLES LAMB

THOSE English critics who at the beginning of the present century introduced from Germany, together with some other subtleties of thought transplanted hither not without advantage, the distinction between the *Fancy* and the *Imagination,* made much also of the cognate distinction between *Wit* and *Humour,* between that unreal and transitory mirth, which is as the crackling of thorns under the pot, and the laughter which blends with tears and even with the sublimities of the imagination, and which, in its most exquisite motives, is one with pity — the laughter of the comedies of Shakespeare, hardly less expressive than his moods of seriousness or solemnity, of that deeply stirred soul of sympathy in him, as flowing from which both tears and laughter are alike genuine and contagious.

This distinction between wit and humour, Coleridge and other kindred critics applied, with much effect, in their studies of some of our older English writers. And as the distinction between imagination and fancy, made popular by Wordsworth, found its best justification in certain essential differences of stuff in Wordsworth's own writings, so this other critical distinction, between wit and humor, finds a sort of visible interpretation and instance in the character and writings of Charles Lamb; — one who lived more consistently than most writers among subtle literary theories, and whose remains are still full of curious interest for the student of literature as a fine art.

The author of the *English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century,* coming to the humourists of the nineteenth, would

have found, as is true pre-eminently of Thackeray himself, the springs of pity in them deepened by the deeper subjectivity, the intenser and closer living with itself, which is characteristic of the temper of the later generation; and therewith, the mirth also, from the amalgam of which with pity humour proceeds, has become, in Charles Dickens, for example, freer and more boisterous.

To this more high-pitched feeling, since predominant in our literature, the writings of Charles Lamb, whose life occupies the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth, are a transition; and such union of grave, of terrible even, with gay, we may note in the circumstances of his life, as reflected thence into his work. We catch the aroma of a singular, homely sweetness about his first years, spent on Thames' side, amid the red bricks and terraced gardens, with their rich historical memories of old-fashioned legal London. Just above the poorer class, deprived, as he says, of the "sweet food of academic institution," he is fortunate enough to be reared in the classical languages at an ancient school, where he becomes the companion of Coleridge, as at a later period he was his enthusiastic disciple. So far, the years go by with less than the usual share of boyish difficulties; protected, one fancies, seeing what he was afterwards, by some attraction of temper in the quaint child, small and delicate, with a certain Jewish expression in his clear, brown complexion, eyes not precisely of the same colour, and a slow walk adding to the staidness of his figure; and whose infirmity of speech, increased by agitation, is partly engaging.

And the cheerfulness of all this, of the mere aspect of Lamb's quiet subsequent life also, might make the more superficial reader think of him as in himself something slight, and of his mirth as cheaply bought. Yet we know that beneath this blithe surface there was something of the fateful

domestic horror, of the beautiful heroism and devotedness too, of old Greek tragedy. His sister Mary, ten years his senior, in a sudden paroxysm of madness, caused the death of her mother, and was brought to trial for what an over-strained justice might have construed as the greatest of crimes. She was released on the brother's pledging himself to watch over her; and to this sister, from the age of twenty-one, Charles Lamb sacrificed himself, "seeking thenceforth," says his earliest biographer, "no connexion which could interfere with her supremacy in his affections, or impair his ability to sustain and comfort her." The "feverish, romantic tie of love," he cast away in exchange for the "charities of home." Only, from time to time, the madness returned, affecting him too, once; and we see the brother and sister voluntarily yielding to restraint. In estimating the humor of *Elia,* we must no more forget the strong undercurrent of this great misfortune and pity, than one could forget it in his actual story. So he becomes the best critic, almost the discoverer, of Webster, a dramatist of genius so sombre, so heavily coloured, so *macabre. Rosamund Gray,* written in his twenty-third year, a story with something bitter and exaggerated, an almost insane fixedness of gloom perceptible in it, strikes clearly this note in his work.

For himself, and from his own point of view, the exercise of his gift, of his literary art, came to gild or sweeten a life of monotonous labour, and seemed, as far as regarded others, no very important thing; availing to give them a little pleasure, and inform them a little, chiefly in a retrospective manner, but in no way concerned with the turning of the tides of the great world. And yet this very modesty, this unambitious way of conceiving his work, has impressed upon it a certain exceptional enduringness. For of the remarkable English writers contemporary with Lamb, many were greatly preoccupied with ideas of practice — religious, moral, polit-

ical — ideas which have since, in some sense or other, entered permanently into the general consciousness; and, these having no longer any stimulus for a generation provided with a different stock of ideas, the writings of those who spent so much of themselves in their propagation have lost, with posterity, something of what they gained by them in immediate influence. Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley even — sharing so largely in the unrest of their own age, and made personally more interesting thereby, yet, of their actual work, surrender more to the mere course of time than some of those who may have seemed to exercise themselves hardly at all in great matters, to have been little serious, or a little indifferent, regarding them.

Of this number of the disinterested servants of literature, smaller in England than in France, Charles Lamb is one. In the making of prose he realises the principle of art for its own sake, as completely as Keats in the making of verse. And, working ever close to the concrete, to the details, great or small, of actual things, books, persons, and with no part of them blurred to his vision by the intervention of mere abstract theories, he has reached an enduring moral effect also, in a sort of boundless sympathy. Unoccupied, as he might seem, with great matters, he is in immediate contact with what is real, especially in its caressing littleness, that littleness in which there is much of the whole woeful heart of things, and meets it more than half-way with a perfect understanding of it. What sudden, unexpected touches of pathos in him! — bearing witness how the sorrow of humanity, the *Welt-schmerz,* the constant aching of its wounds, is ever present with him: but what a gift also for the enjoyment of life in its subtleties, of enjoyment actually refined by the need of some thoughtful economies and making the most of things! Little arts of happiness he is ready to teach to others. The quaint remarks of children which another

would scarcely have heard, he preserves — little flies in the priceless amber of his Attic wit — and has his "Praise of chimney-sweepers" (as William Blake has written, with so much natural pathos, the Chimney-sweeper's Song) valuing carefully their white teeth, and fine enjoyment of white sheets in stolen sleep at Arundel Castle, as he tells the story, anticipating something of the mood of our deep humourists of the last generation. His simple mother-pity for those who suffer by accident, or unkindness of nature, blindness for instance, or fateful disease of mind like his sister's, has something primitive in its largeness; and on behalf of ill-used animals he is early in composing a *Pity's Gift*.

And if, in deeper or more superficial sense, the dead *do* care at all for their name and fame, then how must the souls of Shakespeare and Webster have been stirred, after so long converse with things that stopped their ears, whether above or below the soil, at his exquisite appreciations of them; the souls of Titian and of Hogarth too; for, what has not been observed so generally as the excellence of his literary criticism, Charles Lamb is a fine critic of painting also. It was as loyal, self-forgetful work for others, for Shakespeare's self first, for instance, and then for Shakespeare's readers, that that too was done: he has the true scholar's way of forgetting himself in his subject. For though "defrauded," as we saw, in his young years, "of the sweet food of academic institution," he is yet essentially a scholar, and all his work mainly retrospective, as I said; his own sorrows, affections, perceptions, being alone real to him of the present. "I cannot make these present times," he says once, "present to *me*."

Above all, he becomes not merely an expositor, permanently valuable, but for Englishmen almost the discoverer of the old English drama. "The book is such as I am glad there should be," he modestly says of the *Specimens of Eng-*

lish Dramatic Poets who lived about the time of Shakespeare; to which, however, he adds in a series of notes the very quintessence of criticism, the choicest savour and perfume of Elizabethan poetry being sorted, and stored here, with a sort of delicate intellectual epicureanism, which has had the effect of winning for these, then almost forgotten, poets, one generation after another of enthusiastic students. Could he but have known how fresh a source of culture he was evoking there for other generations, through all those years in which, a little wistfully, he would harp on the limitation of his time by business, and sigh for a better fortune in regard to literary opportunities!

To feel strongly the charm of an old poet or moralist, the literary charm of Burton, for instance, or Quarles, or The Duchess of Newcastle; and then to interpret that charm, to convey it to others — he seeming to himself but to hand on to others, in mere humble ministration, that of which for them he is really the creator — this is the way of his criticism; cast off in a stray letter often, or passing note, or lightest essay or conversation. It is in such a letter, for instance, that we come upon a singularly penetrative estimate of the genius and writings of Defoe.

Tracking, with an attention always alert, the whole process of their production to its starting-point in the deep places of the mind, he seems to realise the but half-conscious intuitions of Hogarth or Shakespeare, and develops the great ruling unities which have swayed their actual work; or "puts up," and takes, the one morsel of good stuff in an old, forgotten writer. Even in what he says casually there comes an aroma of old English; noticeable echoes, in chance turn and phrase, of the great masters of style, the old masters. Godwin, seeing in quotation a passage from *John Woodvil,* takes it for a choice fragment of an old dramatist, and goes to Lamb to assist him in finding the author. His power of delicate

imitation in prose and verse reaches the length of a fine mimicry even, as in those last essays of Elia on Popular Fallacies, with their gentle reproduction or caricature of Sir Thomas Browne, showing, the more completely, his mastery, by disinterested study, of those elements of the man which were the real source of style in that great, solemn master of old English, who, ready to say what he has to say with fearless homeliness, yet continually overawes one with touches of a strange utterance from worlds afar. For it is with the delicacies of fine literature especially, its gradations of expression, its fine judgment, its pure sense of words, of vocabulary — things, alas! dying out in the English literature of the present, together with the appreciation of them in our literature of the past — that his literary mission is chiefly concerned. And yet, delicate, refining, daintily epicurean, as he may seem, when he writes of giants such as Hogarth or Shakespeare, though often but in a stray note, you catch the sense of veneration with which those great names in past literature and art brooded over his intelligence, his undiminished impressibility by the great effects in them. Reading, commenting on Shakespeare, he is like a man who walks alone under a grand stormy sky, and among unwonted tricks of light, when powerful spirits might seem to be abroad upon the air; and the grim humour of Hogarth, as he analyses it, rises into a kind of spectral grotesque; while he too knows the secret of fine, significant touches like theirs.

Their traits, customs, characteristics of houses and dress, surviving morsels of old life, such as Hogarth has transferred so vividly into *The Rake's Progress,* or *Marriage à la Mode,* concerning which we well understand how, common, uninteresting, or even worthless in themselves, they have come to please us at last as things picturesque, being set in relief against the modes of our different age. Customs, stiff to us, stiff dresses, stiff furniture — types of cast-off

fashions, left by accident, and which no one ever meant to preserve — we contemplate with more than good-nature, as having in them the veritable accent of a time, not altogether to be replaced by its more solemn and self-conscious deposits; like those tricks of individuality which we find quite tolerable in persons, because they convey to us the secret of lifelike expression, and with regard to which we are all to some extent humourists. But it is part of the privilege of the genuine humourist to anticipate this pensive mood with regard to the ways and things of his own day; to look upon the tricks in manner of the life about him with that same refined, purged sort of vision, which will come naturally to those of a later generation, in observing whatever may have survived by chance of its mere external habit. Seeing things always by the light of an understanding more entire than is possible for ordinary minds, of the whole mechanism of fashion, always in strict connexion with the spiritual condition which determined it, a humourist such as Charles Lamb anticipates the enchantment of distance; and the characteristics of places, ranks, habits of life, are transfigured for him, even now and in advance of time, by poetic light; justifying what some might condemn as mere sentimentality, in the effort to hand on unbroken the tradition of such fashion or accent. "The praise of beggars," "the cries of London," the traits of actors just grown "old," the spots in "town" where the country, its fresh green and fresh water, still lingered on, one after another, amidst the bustle; the quaint, dimmed, just played-out farces, he had relished so much, coming partly through them to understand the earlier English theatre as a thing once really alive; those fountains and sun-dials of old gardens, of which he entertains such dainty discourse: — he feels the poetry of these things, as the poetry of things old indeed, but surviving as an actual part of the life of the present, and as something quite dif-

ferent from the poetry of things flatly gone from us and antique, which come back to us, if at all, as entire strangers, like Scott's old Scotch-border personages, their oaths and armour. Such gift of appreciation depends, as I said, on the habitual apprehension of men's life as a whole — its organic wholeness, as extending even to the least things in it — of its outward manner in connexion with its inward temper; and it involves a fine perception of the congruities, the musical accordance between humanity and its environment of custom, society, personal intercourse; as if all this, with its meetings, partings, ceremonies, gesture, tones of speech, were some delicate instrument on which an expert performer is playing.

These are some of the characteristics of Elia, one essentially an essayist, and of the true family of Montaigne, "never judging," as he says, "system-wise of things, but fastening on particulars;" saying all things as it were on chance occasion only, and by way of pastime, yet succeeding thus, "glimpse-wise," in catching and recording more frequently than others "the gayest, happiest attitude of things;" a casual writer for dreamy readers, yet always giving the reader so much more than he seemed to propose. There is something of the follower of George Fox about him, and the Quaker's belief in the inward light coming to one passive, to the mere wayfarer, who will be sure at all events to lose no light which falls by the way — glimpses, suggestions, delightful half-apprehensions, profound thoughts of old philosophers, hints of the innermost reason in things, the full knowledge of which is held in reserve; all the varied stuff, that is, of which genuine essays are made.

And with him, as with Montaigne, the desire of self-portraiture is, below all more superficial tendencies, the real motive in writing at all — a desire closely connected with that intimacy, that modern subjectivity, which may be called the *Montaignesque* element in literature. What he designs

is to give you himself, to acquaint you with his likeness; but must do this, if at all, indirectly, being indeed always more or less reserved, for himself and his friends; friendship counting for so much in his life, that he is jealous of anything that might jar or disturb it, even to the length of a sort of insincerity, to which he assigns its quaint "praise"; this lover of stage plays significantly welcoming a little touch of the artificiality of play to sweeten the intercourse of actual life.

And, in effect, a very delicate and expressive portrait of him does put itself together for the duly meditative reader. In indirect touches of his own work, scraps of faded old letters, what others remembered of his talk, the man's likeness emerges; what he laughed and wept at, his sudden elevations, and longings after absent friends, his fine casuistries of affection and devices to jog sometimes, as he says, the lazy happiness of perfect love, his solemn moments of higher discourse with the young, as they came across him on occasion, and went along a little way with him, the sudden, surprised apprehension of beauties in old literature, revealing anew the deep soul of poetry in things, and withal the pure spirit of fun, having its way again; laughter, that most short-lived of all things (some of Shakespeare's even being grown hollow) wearing well with him. Much of all this comes out through his letters, which may be regarded as a department of his essays. He is an old-fashioned letter-writer, the essence of the old fashion of letter-writing lying, as with true essay-writing, in the dexterous availing oneself of accident and circumstance, in the prosecution of deeper lines of observation; although, just as with the record of his conversation, one loses something, in losing the actual tones of the stammerer, still graceful in his halting, as he halted also in composition, composing slowly and by fits, "like a Flemish painter," as he tells us, so "it is to be regretted," says the editor of his letters, "that in the printed letters the

reader will lose the curious varieties of writing with which the originals abound, and which are scrupulously adapted to the subject."

Also, he was a true "collector," delighting in the personal finding of a thing, in the colour an old book or print gets for him by the little accidents which attest previous ownership. Wither's *Emblems*, "that old book and quaint," long-desired, when he finds it at last, he values none the less because a child had coloured the plates with his paints. A lover of household warmth everywhere, of that tempered atmosphere which our various habitations get by men's living within them, he "sticks to his favourite books as he did to his friends," and loved the "town," with a jealous eye for all its characteristics, "old houses" coming to have souls for him. The yearning for mere warmth against him in another, makes him content, all through life, with pure brotherliness, "the most kindly and natural species of love," as he says, in place of the *passion* of love. Brother and sister, sitting thus side by side, have, of course, their anticipations how one of them must sit at last in the faint sun alone, and set us speculating, as we read, as to precisely what amount of melancholy really accompanied for him the approach of old age, so steadily foreseen; make us note also, with pleasure, his successive wakings up to cheerful realities, out of a too curious musing over what is gone and what remains, of life. In his subtle capacity for enjoying the more refined points of earth, of human relationship, he could throw the gleam of poetry or humour on what seemed common or threadbare; has a care for the sighs, and the weary, humdrum preoccupations of very weak people, down to their little pathetic "gentilities," even; while, in the purely human temper, he can write of death, almost like Shakespeare.

And that care, through all his enthusiasm of discovery, for what is accustomed, in literature, connected thus with his

close clinging to home and the earth, was congruous also with that love for the accustomed in religion, which we may notice in him. He is one of the last votaries of that old-world sentiment, based on the feelings of hope and awe, which may be described as the religion of men of letters (as Sir Thomas Browne has his *Religion of the Physician*) religion as understood by the soberer men of letters in the last century, Addison, Gray, and Johnson; by Jane Austen and Thackeray, later. A high way of feeling developed largely by constant intercourse with the great things of literature, and extended in its turn to those matters greater still, this religion lives, in the main retrospectively, in a system of received sentiments and beliefs; received, like those great things of literature and art, in the first instance, on the authority of a long tradition, in the course of which they have linked themselves in a thousand complex ways to the conditions of human life, and no more questioned now than the feeling one keeps by one of the greatness — say! of Shakespeare. For Charles Lamb, such form of religion becomes the solemn background on which the nearer and more exciting objects of his immediate experience relieve themselves, borrowing from it an expression of calm; its necessary atmosphere being indeed a profound quiet, that quiet which has in it a kind of sacramental efficacy, working, we might say, on the principle of the *opus operatum,* almost without any co-operation of one's own, towards the assertion of the higher self. And, in truth, to men of Lamb's delicately attuned temperament mere physical stillness has its full value; such natures seeming to long for it sometimes, as for no merely negative thing, with a sort of mystical sensuality.

The writings of Charles Lamb are an excellent illustration of the value of reserve in literature. Below his quiet, his quaintness, his humour, and what may seem the slightness,

the occasional or accidental character of his work, there lies, as I said at starting, as in his life, a genuinely tragic element. The gloom, reflected at its darkest in those hard shadows of *Rosamund Gray,* is always there, though not always realised either for himself or his readers, and restrained always in utterance. It gives to those lighter matters on the surface of life and literature among which he for the most part moved, a wonderful force of expression, as if at any moment these slight words and fancies might pierce very far into the deeper soul of things. In his writing, as in his life, that quiet is not the low-flying of one from the first drowsy by choice, and needing the prick of some strong passion or worldly ambition, to stimulate him into all the energy of which he is capable; but rather the reaction of nature, after an escape from fate, dark and insane as in old Greek tragedy, following upon which the sense of mere relief becomes a kind of passion, as with one who, having narrowly escaped earthquake or shipwreck, finds a thing for grateful tears in just sitting quiet at home, under the wall, till the end of days.

He felt the genius of places; and I sometimes think he resembles the places he knew and liked best, and where his lot fell — London, sixty-five years ago, with Covent Garden and the old theatres, and the Temple gardens still unspoiled, Thames gliding down, and beyond to north and south the fields at Enfield or Hampton, to which, "with their living trees," the thoughts wander "from the hard wood of the desk" — fields fresher, and coming nearer to town then, but in one of which the present writer remembers, on a brooding early summer's day, to have heard the cuckoo for the first time. Here, the surface of things is certainly humdrum, the streets dingy, the green places, where the child goes a-maying, tame enough. But nowhere are things more apt to respond to the brighter weather, nowhere is there so

much difference between rain and sunshine, nowhere do the clouds roll together more grandly; those quaint suburban pastorals gathering a certain quality of grandeur from the background of the great city, with its weighty atmosphere, and portent of storm in the rapid light on dome and bleached stone steeples.

WALT WHITMAN

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

This is an example of the familiar essay on a critical theme. Stevenson imparts a personal flavor to his literary criticism, letting his choice of subject reflect his feeling about life's values. The joy in health and well-being, the buoyant, courageous spirit, the acceptance of life as a dangerous but thrilling adventure, the largeness and robustness of his human sympathies, are qualities of Whitman which responded to an individual need in Stevenson. He admires, therefore, the poet's vitality, the tremendous gusto with which he absorbed sensations, the genuine democracy with which he embraced all sorts of humanity. These were the energies and the sympathies which Europeans in general expected to see emerging from America, and that is why Whitman was acclaimed abroad even before his merits were discovered by his own countrymen. In Stevenson, however, there was also a conscientious artist who could not stomach the crudities, the violations of normal taste, the unconventional freedom, the tendency to formlessness which were present in Whitman's work. We therefore find him taking a middle position between the enthusiastic admirers of Whitman and those who disdained him as a licentious barbarian, "mediating between the author whom he loves and the public who are certainly indifferent and frequently averse." It is to make his praise more plausible that he shows his realization of the defects of Whitman's writings. Though, thanks to such enthusiasts as Stevenson, Whitman now enjoys a far broader recognition, this essay still remains a valid and living statement of the merits of America's most original poet. (It appeared in the *New Monthly Magazine,* October, 1878, and was reprinted in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books,* 1882.)

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WALT WHITMAN

OF late years the name of Walt Whitman has been a good deal bandied about in books and magazines. It has become familiar both in good and ill repute. His works have been largely bespattered with praise by his admirers, and cruelly mauled and mangled by irreverent enemies. Now, whether his poetry is good or bad as poetry, is a matter that may admit of a difference of opinion without alienating those who differ. We could not keep the peace with a man who should put forward claims to taste and yet depreciate the choruses in *Samson Agonistes;* but, I think, we may shake hands with one who sees no more in Walt Whitman's volume, from a literary point of view, than a farrago of incompetent essays in a wrong direction. That may not be at all our own opinion. We may think that, when a work contains many unforgettable phrases, it cannot be altogether devoid of literary merit. We may even see passages of a high poetry here and there among its eccentric contents. But when all is said, Walt Whitman is neither a Milton nor a Shakespeare; to appreciate his works is not a condition necessary to salvation; and I would not disinherit a son upon the question, nor even think much the worse of a critic, for I should always have an idea what he meant.

What Whitman has to say is another affair from how he says it. It is not possible to acquit any one of defective intelligence, or else stiff prejudice, who is not interested by Whitman's matter and the spirit it represents. Not as a poet, but as what we must call (for lack of a more exact expression) a prophet, he occupies a curious and prominent

position. Whether he may greatly influence the future or not, he is a notable symptom of the present. As a sign of the times, it would be hard to find his parallel. I should hazard a large wager, for instance, that he was not unacquainted with the works of Herbert Spencer; and yet where, in all the history books, shall we lay our hands on two more incongruous contemporaries? Mr. Spencer so decorous — I had almost said, so dandy — in dissent; and Whitman, like a large shaggy dog, just unchained, scouring the beaches of the world and baying at the moon. And when is an echo more curiously like a satire, than when Mr. Spencer found his Synthetic Philosophy reverberated from the other shores of the Atlantic in the "barbaric yawp" of Whitman?

I

Whitman, it cannot be too soon explained, writes up to a system. He was a theoriser about society before he was a poet. He first perceived something wanting, and then sat down squarely to supply the want. The reader, running over his works, will find that he takes nearly as much pleasure in critically expounding his theory of poetry as in making poems. This is as far as it can be from the case of the spontaneous village minstrel dear to elegy, who has no theory whatever, although sometimes he may have fully as much poetry as Whitman. The whole of Whitman's work is deliberate and preconceived. A man born into a society comparatively new, full of conflicting elements and interests, could not fail, if he had any thoughts at all, to reflect upon the tendencies around him. He saw much good and evil on all sides, not yet settled down into some more or less unjust compromise as in older nations, but still in the act of settlement. And he could not but wonder what it would turn out; whether the compromise would be very just

or very much the reverse, and give great or little scope for healthy human energies. From idle wonder to active speculation is but a step; and he seems to have been early struck with the inefficacy of literature and its extreme unsuitability to the conditions. What he calls "Feudal Literature" could have little living action on the tumult of American democracy; what he calls the "Literature of Woe," meaning the whole tribe of Werther and Byron, could have no action for good in any time or place. Both propositions, if art had none but a direct moral influence, would be true enough; and as this seems to be Whitman's view, they were true enough for him. He conceived the idea of a Literature which was to inhere in the life of the present; which was to be, first human, and next American; which was to be brave and cheerful as per contract; to give culture in a popular and poetical presentment; and, in so doing, catch and stereotype some democratic ideal of humanity which should be equally natural to all grades of wealth and education, and suited, in one of his favorite phrases, to "the average man." To the formation of some such literature as this his poems are to be regarded as so many contributions, one sometimes explaining, sometimes superseding, the other: and the whole together not so much a finished work as a body of suggestive hints. He does not profess to have built the castle, but he pretends he has traced the lines of the foundation. He has not made the poetry, but he flatters himself he has done something towards making the poets.

His notion of the poetic function is ambitious, and coincides roughly with what Schopenhauer has laid down as the province of the metaphysician. The poet is to gather together for men, and set in order, the materials of their existence. He is "The Answerer"; he is to find some way of speaking about life that shall satisfy, if only for the moment, man's enduring astonishment at his own position. And be-

sides having an answer ready, it is he who shall provoke the question. He must shake people out of their indifference, and force them to make some election in this world, instead of sliding dully forward in a dream. Life is a business we are all apt to mismanage; either living recklessly from day to day, or suffering ourselves to be gulled out of our moments by the inanities of custom. We should despise a man who gave as little activity and forethought to the conduct of any other business. But in this, which is the one thing of all others, since it contains them all, we cannot see the forest for the trees. One brief impression obliterates another. There is something stupefying in the recurrence of unimportant things. And it is only on rare provocations that we can rise to take an outlook beyond daily concerns, and comprehend the narrow limits and great possibilities of our existence. It is the duty of the poet to induce such moments of clear sight. He is the declared enemy of all living by reflex action, of all that is done betwixt sleep and waking, of all the pleasureless pleasurings and imaginary duties in which we coin away our hearts and fritter invaluable years. He has to electrify his readers into an instant unflagging activity, founded on a wide and eager observation of the world, and make them direct their ways by a superior prudence, which has little or nothing in common with the maxims of the copy-book. That many of us lead such lives as they would heartily disown after two hours' serious reflection on the subject is, I am afraid, a true, and I am sure, a very galling thought. The Enchanted Ground of dead-alive respectability is next, upon the map, to the Beulah of considerate virtue. But there they all slumber and take their rest in the middle of God's beautiful and wonderful universe; the drowsy heads have nodded together in the same position since first their fathers fell asleep; and not even the sound of the last trumpet can wake them to a single

active thought. The poet has a hard task before him to stir up such fellows to a sense of their own and other people's principles in life.

And it happens that literature is, in some ways, but an indifferent means to such an end. Language is but a poor bull's-eye lantern wherewith to show off the vast cathedral of the world; and yet a particular thing once said in words is so definite and memorable, that it makes us forget the absence of the many which remain unexpressed; like a bright window in a distant view, which dazzles and confuses our sight of its surroundings. There are not words enough in all Shakespeare to express the merest fraction of a man's experience in an hour. The speed of the eyesight and the hearing, and the continual industry of the mind, produce, in ten minutes, what it would require a laborious volume to shadow forth by comparisons and roundabout approaches. If verbal logic were sufficient, life would be as plain sailing as a piece of Euclid. But, as a matter of fact, we make a travesty of the simplest process of thought when we put it into words; for the words are all coloured and forsworn, apply inaccurately, and bring with them, from former uses, ideas of praise and blame that have nothing to do with the question in hand. So we must always see to it nearly, that we judge by the realities of life and not by the partial terms that represent them in man's speech; and at times of choice, we must leave words upon one side, and act upon those brute convictions, unexpressed and perhaps inexpressible, which cannot be flourished in an argument, but which are truly the sum and fruit of our experience. Words are for communication, not for judgment. This is what every thoughtful man knows for himself, for only fools and silly schoolmasters push definitions over far into the domain of conduct; and the majority of women, not learned in these scholastic refinements, live all-of-a-piece and unconsciously, as a tree

grows, without caring to put a name upon their acts or motives. Hence, a new difficulty for Whitman's scrupulous and argumentative poet; he must do more than waken up the sleepers to his words; he must persuade them to look over the book and at life with their own eyes.

This side of truth is very present to Whitman; it is this that he means when he tells us that "To glance with an eye confounds the learning of all times." But he is not unready. He is never weary of descanting on the undebatable conviction that is forced upon our minds by the presence of other men, of animals, or of inanimate things. To glance with an eye, were it only at a chair or a park railing, is by far a more persuasive process, and brings us to a far more exact conclusion, than to read the works of all the logicians extant. If both, by a large allowance, may be said to end in certainty, the certainty in the one case transcends the other to an incalculable degree. If people see a lion, they run away; if they only apprehend a deduction, they keep wandering around in an experimental humour. Now, how is the poet to convince like nature, and not like books? Is there no actual piece of nature that he can show the man to his face, as he might show him a tree if they were walking together? Yes, there is one: the man's own thoughts. In fact, if the poet is to speak efficaciously, he must say what is already in his hearer's mind. That, alone, the hearer will believe; that, alone, he will be able to apply intelligently to the facts of life. Any conviction, even if it be a whole system or a whole religion, must pass into the condition of commonplace, or postulate, before it becomes fully operative. Strange excursions and high-flying theories may interest, but they cannot rule behavior. Our faith is not the highest truth that we perceive, but the highest that we have been able to assimilate into the very texture and method of our thinking. It is not, therefore, by flashing before a man's

eyes the weapons of dialectic; it is not by induction, deduction, or construction; it is not by forcing him on from one stage of reasoning to another, that the man will be effectually renewed. He cannot be made to believe anything; but he can be made to see that he has always believed it. And this is the practical canon. It is when the reader cries, "Oh, I know!" and is, perhaps, half irritated to see how nearly the author has forestalled his own thoughts, that he is on the way to what is called in theology a Saving Faith.

Here we have the key to Whitman's attitude. To give a certain unity of ideal to the average population of America — to gather their activities about some conception of humanity that shall be central and normal, if only for the moment — the poet must portray that population as it is. Like human law, human poetry is simply declaratory. If any ideal is possible, it must be already in the thoughts of the people; and, by the same reason, in the thoughts of the poet, who is one of them. And hence Whitman's own formula: "The poet is individual — he is complete in himself: the others are as good as he; only he sees it, and they do not." To show them how good they are, the poet must study his fellow-countrymen and himself somewhat like a traveller on the hunt for his book of travels. There is a sense, of course, in which all true books are books of travel; and all genuine poets must run their risk of being charged with the traveller's exaggeration; for to whom are such books more surprising than to those whose own life is faithfully and smartly pictured? But this danger is all upon one side; and you may judiciously flatter the portrait without any likelihood of the sitter's disowning it for a faithful likeness. And so Whitman has reasoned: that by drawing at first hand from himself and his neighbours, accepting without shame the inconsistencies and brutalities that go to make up man, and

yet treating the whole in a high, magnanimous spirit, he would make sure of belief, and at the same time encourage people forward by the means of praise.

II

We are accustomed nowadays to a great deal of puling over the circumstances in which we are placed. The great refinement of many poetical gentlemen has rendered them practically unfit for the jostling and ugliness of life, and they record their unfitness at considerable length. The bold and awful poetry of Job's complaint produces too many flimsy imitators; for there is always something consolatory in grandeur, but the symphony transposed for the piano becomes hysterically sad. This literature of woe, as Whitman calls it, this *Maladie de René*, as we like to call it in Europe, is in many ways a most humiliating and sickly phenomenon. Young gentlemen with three or four hundred a year of private means look down from a pinnacle of doleful experience on all the grown and hearty men who have dared to say a good word for life since the beginning of the world. There is no prophet but the melancholy Jacques, and the blue devils dance on all our literary wires.

It would be a poor service to spread culture, if this be its result, among the comparatively innocent and cheerful ranks of men. When our little poets have to be sent to look at the ploughman and learn wisdom, we must be careful how we tamper with our ploughmen. Where a man in not the best of circumstances preserves composure of mind, and relishes ale and tobacco, and his wife and children, in the intervals of dull and unremunerative labour; where a man in this predicament can afford a lesson by the way to what are called his intellectual superiors, there is plainly something to be lost, as well as something to be gained, by teaching him

to think differently. It is better to leave him as he is than to teach him whining. It is better that he should go without the cheerful lights of culture, if cheerless doubt and paralysing sentimentalism are to be the consequence. Let us, by all means, fight against that hide-bound stolidity of sensation and sluggishness of mind which blurs and decolorises for poor natures the wonderful pageant of consciousness; let us teach people, as much as we can, to enjoy, and they will learn for themselves to sympathise; but let us see to it, above all, that we give these lessons in a brave, vivacious note, and build the man up in courage while we demolish its substitute, indifference.

Whitman is alive to all this. He sees that, if the poet is to be of any help, he must testify to the livableness of life. His poems, he tells us, are to be "hymns of the praise of things." They are to make for a certain high joy in living, or what he calls himself "a brave delight fit for freedom's athletes." And he has no difficulty in introducing his optimism: it fitted readily enough to his system; for the average man is truly a courageous person and truly fond of living. One of Whitman's remarks upon this head is worth quotation, as he is there perfectly successful, and does precisely what he designs to do throughout: Takes ordinary and even commonplace circumstances; throws them out, by a happy turn of thinking, into significance and something like beauty; and tacks a hopeful moral lesson to the end.

"The passionate tenacity of hunters, woodmen, early risers, cultivators of gardens and orchards and fields," he says, "the love of healthy women for the manly form, seafaring persons, drivers of horses, the passion for light and the open air, — all is an old unvaried sign of the unfailing perception of beauty, and of the residence of the poetic in outdoor people."

There seems to me something truly original in this choice

of trite examples. You will remark how adroitly Whitman begins, hunters and woodmen being confessedly romantic. And one thing more. If he had said "the love of healthy men for the female form," he would have said almost a silliness; for the thing has never been dissembled out of delicacy, and is so obvious as to be a public nuisance. But by reversing it, he tells us something not unlike news; something that sounds quite freshly in words; and, if the reader be a man, gives him a moment of great self-satisfaction and spiritual aggrandisement. In many different authors you may find passages more remarkable for grammar, but few of a more ingenious turn, and none that could be more to the point in our connection. The tenacity of many ordinary people in ordinary pursuits is a sort of standing challenge to everybody else. If one man can grow absorbed in delving his garden, others may grow absorbed and happy over something else. Not to be upsides in this with any groom or gardener, is to be very meanly organised. A man should be ashamed to take his food if he has not alchemy enough in his stomach to turn some of it into intense and enjoyable occupation.

Whitman tries to reinforce this cheerfulness by keeping up a sort of outdoor atmosphere of sentiment. His book, he tells us, should be read "among the cooling influences of external nature"; and this recommendation, like that other famous one which Hawthorne prefixed to his collected tales, is in itself a character of the work. Every one who has been upon a walking or a boating tour, living in the open air, with the body in constant exercise and the mind in fallow, knows true ease and quiet. The irritating action of the brain is set at rest; we think in a plain, unfeverish temper; little things seem big enough, and great things no longer portentous; and the world is smilingly accepted as it is. This is the spirit that Whitman inculcates and parades. He thinks

very ill of the atmosphere of parlours and libraries. Wisdom keeps school outdoors. And he has the art to recommend this attitude of mind by simply pluming himself upon it as a virtue; so that the reader, to keep the advantage over his author which most readers enjoy, is tricked into professing the same view. And this spirit, as it is his chief lesson, is the greatest charm of his work. Thence, in spite of an uneven and emphatic key of expression, something trenchant and straightforward, something simple and surprising, distinguishes his poems. He has sayings that come home to one like the Bible. We fall upon Whitman, after the works of so many men who write better, with a sense of relief from strain, with a sense of touching nature, as when one passes out of the flaring, noisy thoroughfares of a great city into what he himself has called, with unexcelled imaginative justice of language, "the huge and thoughtful night." And his book in consequence, whatever may be the final judgment of its merit, whatever may be its influence on the future, should be in the hands of all parents and guardians as a specific for the distressing malady of being seventeen years old. Greensickness yields to his treatment as to a charm of magic; and the youth, after a short course of reading, ceases to carry the universe upon his shoulders.

III

Whitman is not one of those who can be deceived by familiarity. He considers it just as wonderful that there are myriads of stars, as that one man should rise from the dead. He declares "a hair on the back of his hand just as curiour as any special revelation." His whole life is to him what it was to Sir Thomas Browne, — one perpetual miracle. Everything is strange, everything unaccountable, everything beautiful; from a bug to the moon, from the

sight of the eyes to the appetite for food. He makes it his business to see things as if he saw them for the first time, and professes astonishment on principle. But he has no leaning towards mythology; avows his contempt for what he calls "unregenerate poetry"; and does not mean by nature "the smooth walks, trimmed hedges, butterflies, posies, and nightingales of the English poets, but the whole orb, with its geologic history, the Kosmos, carrying fire and snow, that rolls through the illimitable areas, light as a feather though weighing billions of tons."

Nor is this exhaustive; for in his character of idealist all impressions, all thoughts, trees and people, love and faith, astronomy, history, and religion, enter upon equal terms into his notion of the universe. He is not against religion; not, indeed, against any religion. He wishes to drag with a larger net, to make a more comprehensive synthesis, than any or than all of them put together. In feeling after the central type of man, he must embrace all eccentricities; his cosmology must subsume all cosmologies, and the feelings that gave birth to them; his statements of facts must include all religion and all irreligion, Christ and Boodha, God and the devil. The world as it is, and the whole world as it is, physical, and spiritual, and historical, with its good and bad, with its manifold inconsistencies, is what he wishes to set forth, in strong, picturesque, and popular lineaments, for the understanding of the average man. One of his favorite endeavours is to get the whole matter in a nutshell; to knock the four corners of the universe, one after another, about his reader's ears; to hurry him, in breathless phrases, hither and thither, back and forward, in time and space; to focus all this about his own momentary personality; and then, drawing the ground from under his feet, as if by some cataclysm of nature, to plunge him into the unfathomable abyss sown with enormous suns and systems, and among the

inconceivable numbers and magnitudes and velocities of the heavenly bodies. So that he concludes by striking into us some sense of that disproportion of things which Shelley has illuminated by the ironical flash of those eight words: The desire of the moth for the star.

The same truth, but to what a different purpose! Whitman's moth is mightily at his ease about all the planets in heaven, and cannot think too highly of our sublunary tapers. The universe is so large that imagination flags in the effort to conceive it; but here, in the meantime, is the world under our feet, a very warm and habitable corner. "The earth, that is sufficient; I do not want the constellations any nearer," he remarks. And again: "Let your soul stand cool and composed," says he, "before a million universes." It is the language of a transcendental common sense, such as Thoreau held and sometimes uttered. But Whitman, who has a somewhat vulgar inclination for technical talk and the jargon of philosophy, is not content with a few pregnant hints; he must put the dots upon his *i*'s; he must corroborate the songs of Apollo by some of the darkest talk of human metaphysic. He tells his disciples that they must be ready "to confront the growing arrogance of Realism." Each person is, for himself, the keystone and the occasion of this universal edifice. "Nothing, not God," he says, "is greater to one than oneself is"; a statement with an irreligious smack at the first sight; but like most startling sayings, a manifest truism on a second. He will give effect to his own character without apology; he sees "that the elementary laws never apologise." "I reckon," he adds, with quaint colloquial arrogance, "I reckon I behave no prouder than the level I plant my house by, after all." The level follows the law of its being; so, unrelentingly, will he; everything, every person, is good in his own place and way; God is the maker of all, and all are in one design. For he believes in

God, and that with a sort of blasphemous security. "No array of terms," quoth he, "no array of terms can say how much at peace I am about God and about death." There certainly never was a prophet who carried things with a higher hand; he gives us less a body of dogmas than a series of proclamations by the grace of God; and language, you will observe, positively fails him to express how far he stands above the highest human doubts and trepidations.

But next in order of truths to a person's sublime conviction of himself, comes the attraction of one person for another, and all that we mean by the word love: —

"The dear love of man for his comrade — the attraction of friend for friend,
Of the well-married husband and wife, of children and parents,
Of city for city and land for land."

The solitude of the most sublime idealist is broken in upon by other people's faces; he sees a look in their eyes that corresponds to something in his own heart; there comes a tone in their voices which convicts him of a startling weakness for his fellow-creatures. While he is hymning the *ego* and commercing with God and the universe, a woman goes below his window; and at the turn of her skirt, or the colour of her eyes, Icarus is recalled from heaven by the run. Love is so startlingly real that it takes rank upon an equal footing of reality with the consciousness of personal existence. We are as heartily persuaded of the identity of those we love as of our own identity. And so sympathy pairs with self-assertion, the two gerents of human life on earth; and Whitman's ideal man must not only be strong, free, and self-reliant in himself, but his freedom must be bounded and his strength perfected by the most intimate, eager, and long-suffering love for others. To some extent this is taking away with the left hand what has been so generously given with the

right. Morality has been ceremoniously extruded from the door only to be brought in again by the window. We are told, on one page, to do as we please; and on the next we are sharply upbraided for not having done as the author pleases. We are first assured that we are the finest fellows in the world in our own right; and then it appears that we are only fine fellows in so far as we practise a most quixotic code of morals. The disciple who saw himself in clear ether a moment before is plunged down again among the fogs and complications of duty. And this is all the more overwhelming because Whitman insists not only on love between sex and sex, and between friends of the same sex, but in the field of the less intense political sympathies; and his ideal man must not only be a generous friend but a conscientious voter into the bargain.

His method somewhat lessens the difficulty. He is not, the reader will remember, to tell us how good we ought to be, but to remind us how good we are. He is to encourage us to be free and kind, by proving that we are free and kind already. He passes our corporate life under review, to show that it is upheld by the very virtues of which he makes himself the advocate. "There is no object so soft," he says somewhere in his big, plain way, "there is no object so soft but it makes a hub for the wheel'd universe." Rightly understood, it is on the softest of all objects, the sympathetic heart, that the wheel of society turns easily and securely as on a perfect axle. There is no room, of course, for doubt or discussion about conduct, where every one is to follow the law of his being with exact compliance. Whitman hates doubt, deprecates discussion, and discourages to his utmost the craving, carping sensibilities of the conscience. We are to imitate, to use one of his absurd and happy phrases, "the satisfaction and aplomb of animals." If he preaches a sort of ranting Christianity in morals, a fit consequent to the

ranting optimism of his cosmology, it is because he declares it to be the original deliverance of the human heart; or at least, for he would be honestly historical in method, of the human heart as at present Christianised. His is a morality without a prohibition; his policy is one of encouragement all round. A man must be a born hero to come up to Whitman's standard in the practice of any of the positive virtues; but of a negative virtue, such as temperance or chastity, he has so little to say, that the reader need not be surprised if he drops a word or two upon the wrong side. He would lay down nothing that would be a clog; he would prescribe nothing that cannot be done ruddily, in a heat. The great point is to get people under way. To the faithful Whitmanite this would be justified by the belief that God made all, and that all was good; the prophet, in this doctrine, has only to cry "Tally-ho," and mankind will break into a gallop on the road to El Dorado. Perhaps, to another class of minds, it may look like the result of the somewhat cynical reflection that you will not make a kind man out of one who is unkind by any precepts under heaven; tempered by the belief, that in natural circumstances, the large majority is well disposed. Thence it would follow, that if you can only get every one to feel more warmly and act more courageously, the balance of results will be for good.

So far, you see, the doctrine is pretty coherent as a doctrine; as a picture of man's life it is incomplete and misleading, although eminently cheerful. This he is himself the first to acknowledge; for if he is prophetic in anything, it is in his noble disregard of consistency. "Do I contradict myself?" he asks somewhere; and then pat comes the answer, the best answer ever given in print, worthy of a sage, or rather of a woman: "Very well, then, I contradict myself!" with this addition, not so feminine and perhaps not altogether so satisfactory: "I am large — I contain multi-

tudes." Life, as a matter of fact, partakes largely of the nature of tragedy. The gospel according to Whitman, even if it be not so logical, has this advantage over the gospel according to Pangloss, that it does not utterly disregard the existence of temporal evil. Whitman accepts the fact of disease and wretchedness like an honest man; and instead of trying to qualify it in the interest of his optimism, sets himself to spur people up to be helpful. He expresses a conviction, indeed, that all will be made up to the victims in the end; that " what is untried and afterward " will fail no one, not even " the old man who has lived without purpose and feels it with bitterness worse than gall." But this is not to palliate our sense of what is hard or melancholy in the present. Pangloss, smarting under one of the worst things that ever was supposed to come from America, consoled himself with the reflection that it was the price we have to pay for cochineal. And with that murderous parody, logical optimism and the praises of the best of possible worlds went irrevocably out of season, and have been no more heard of in the mouths of reasonable men. Whitman spares us all allusions to the cochineal; he treats evil and sorrow in a spirit almost as of welcome; as an old sea-dog might have welcomed the sight of the enemy's topsails off the Spanish Main. There, at least, he seems to say, is something obvious to be done. I do not know many better things in literature than the brief pictures, — brief and vivid like things seen by lightning, — with which he tries to stir up the world's heart upon the side of mercy. He braces us, on the one hand, with examples of heroic duty and helpfulness; on the other, he touches us with pitiful instances of people needing help. He knows how to make the heart beat at a brave story; to inflame us with just resentment over the hunted slave; to stop our mouths for shame when he tells of the drunken prostitute. For all the afflicted, all the weak, all the wicked, a

good word is said in a spirit which I can only call one of ultra-Christianity; and however wild, however contradictory it may be in parts, this at least may be said for his book, as it may be said of the Christian Gospels, that no one will read it, however respectable, but he gets a knock upon his conscience; no one however fallen, but he finds a kindly and supporting welcome.

IV

Nor has he been content with merely blowing the trumpet for the battle of well-doing; he has given to his precepts the authority of his own brave example. Naturally a grave, believing man, with little or no sense of humour, he has succeeded as well in life as in his printed performances. The spirit that was in him has come forth most eloquently in his actions. Many who have only read his poetry have been tempted to set him down as an ass, or even as a charlatan; but I never met any one who had known him personally who did not profess a solid affection and respect for the man's character. He practises as he professes; he feels deeply that Christian love for all men, that toleration, that cheerful delight in serving others, which he often celebrates in literature with a doubtful measure of success. And perhaps, out of all his writings, the best and the most human and convincing passages are to be found in "these soil'd and creas'd little livraisons, each composed of a sheet or two of paper, folded small to carry in the pocket, and fastened with a pin," which he scribbled during the war by the bedsides of the wounded or in the excitement of great events. They are hardly literature in the formal meaning of the word; he has left his jottings for the most part as he made them; a homely detail, a word from the lips of a dying soldier, a business memorandum, the copy of a letter — short, straightforward to the point, with none of the trappings of composition; but

they breathe a profound sentiment, they give us a vivid look at one of the sides of life, and they make us acquainted with the man whom it is an honour to love.

Whitman's intense Americanism, his unlimited belief in the future of These States (as, with reverential capitals, he loves to call them), made the war a period of great trial to his soul. The new virtue, Unionism, of which he is the sole inventor, seemed to have fallen into premature unpopularity. All that he loved, hoped, or hated, hung in the balance. And the game of war was not only momentous to him in its issues; it sublimated his spirit by its heroic displays, and tortured him intimately by the spectacle of its horrors. It was a theatre, it was a place of education, it was like a season of religious revival. He watched Lincoln going daily to his work; he studied and fraternised with young soldiery passing to the front; above all, he walked the hospitals, reading the Bible, distributing clean clothes, or apples, or tobacco; a patient, helpful, reverend man, full of kind speeches.

His memoranda of this period are almost bewildering to read. From one point of view they seem those of a district visitor; from another, they look like the formless jottings of an artist in the picturesque. More than one woman, on whom I tried the experiment, immediately claimed the writer for a fellow-woman. More than one literary purist might identify him as a shoddy newspaper correspondent without the necessary faculty of style. And yet the story touches home; and if you are of the order of mankind, you will certainly find your eyes fill with tears, of which you have no reason to be ashamed. There is only one way to characterise a work of this order, and that is to quote. Here is a passage from a letter to a mother, unknown to Whitman, whose son died in hospital: —

"Frank, as far as I saw, had everything requisite in surgical treatment, nursing, etc. He had watches much of

the time. He was so good and well-behaved, and affectionate. I myself liked him very much. I was in the habit of coming in afternoons and sitting by him, and he liked to have me — liked to put out his arm and lay his hand on my knee — would keep it so a long while. Toward the last he was more restless and flighty at night — often fancied himself with his regiment — by his talk sometimes seem'd as if his feelings were hurt by being blamed by his officers for something he was entirely innocent of — said 'I never in my life was thought capable of such a thing, and never was.' At other times he would fancy himself talking as it seem'd to children or such like, his relatives, I suppose, and giving them good advice; would talk to them a long while. All the time he was out of his head not one single bad word or thought, or idea escaped him. It was remark'd that many a man's conversation in his senses was not half so good as Frank's delirium.

"He was perfectly willing to die — he had become very weak, and had suffer'd a good deal, and was perfectly resign'd, poor boy. I do not know his past life, but I feel as if it must have been good. At any rate what I saw of him here, under the most trying circumstances, with a painful wound, and among strangers, I can say that he behaved so brave, so composed, and so sweet and affectionate, it could not be surpassed. And now, like many other noble and good men, after serving his country as a soldier, he had yielded up his young life at the very outset in her service. Such things are gloomy — yet there is a text, 'God doeth all things well,' the meaning of which, after due time, appears to the soul.

"I thought perhaps a few words, though from a stranger, about your son, from one who was with him at the last, might be worth while, for I loved the young man, though I but saw him immediately to lose him."

It is easy enough to pick holes in the grammar of this letter, but what are we to say of its profound goodness and tenderness? It is written as though he had the mother's face before his eyes, and saw her wincing in the flesh at every word. And what, again, are we to say of its sober truthfulness, not exaggerating, not running to phrases, not seeking to make a hero out of what was only an ordinary but good and brave young man? Literary reticence is not Whitman's stronghold; and this reticence is not literary but humane; it is not that of a good artist but that of a good man. He knew that what the mother wished to hear about was Frank; and he told her about her Frank as he was.

V

Something should be said of Whitman's style, for style is of the essence of thinking. And where a man is so critically deliberate as our author, and goes solemnly about his poetry for an ulterior end, every indication is worth notice. He has chosen a rough, unrhymed, lyrical verse; sometimes instinct with a fine processional movement; often so rugged and careless that it can only be described by saying that he has not taken the trouble to write prose. I believe myself that it was selected principally because it was easy to write, although not without recollections of the marching measures of some of the prose in our English Old Testament. According to Whitman, on the other hand, "the time has arrived to essentially break down the barriers of form between Prose and Poetry . . . for the most cogent purposes of those great inland states, and for Texas, and California, and Oregon"; — a statement which is among the happiest achievements of American humour. He calls his verses "recitatives," in easily followed allusion to a musical form. "Easily-written, loose-fingered chords," he cries, "I feel the

thrum of your climax and close." Too often, I fear, he is the only one who can perceive the rhythm; and in spite of Mr. Swinburne, a great part of his work considered as verse is poor bald stuff. Considered, not as verse, but as speech, a great part of it is full of strange and admirable merits. The right detail is seized; the right word, bold and trenchant, is thrust into its place. Whitman has small regard to literary decencies, and is totally free from literary timidities. He is neither afraid of being slangy nor of being dull; nor, let me add, of being ridiculous. The result is a most surprising compound of plain grandeur, sentimental affectation, and downright nonsense. It would be useless to follow his detractors and give instances of how bad he can be at his worst; and perhaps it would be not much wiser to give extracted specimens of how happily he can write when he is at his best. These come in to most advantage in their own place; owing something, it may be, to the offset of their curious surroundings. And one thing is certain, that no one can appreciate Whitman's excellencies until he has grown accustomed to his faults. Until you are content to pick poetry out of his pages almost as you must pick it out of a Greek play in Bohn's translation, your gravity will be continually upset, your ears perpetually disappointed, and the whole book will be no more to you than a particularly flagrant production by the Poet Close.

A writer of this uncertain quality was, perhaps, unfortunate in taking for thesis the beauty of the world as it now is, not only on the hill-tops but in the factory; not only by the harbour full of stately ships, but in the magazine of the hopelessly prosaic hatter. To show beauty in common things is the work of the rarest tact. It is not to be done by the wishing. It is easy to posit as a theory, but to bring it home to men's minds is the problem of literature, and is only accomplished by rare talent, and in comparatively rare in-

stances. To bid the whole world stand and deliver, with a dogma in one's right hand by way of pistol; to cover reams of paper in a galloping, headstrong vein; to cry louder and louder over everything as it comes up, and make no distinction in one's enthusiasm over the most incomparable matters; to prove one's entire want of sympathy for the jaded, literary palate, by calling, not a spade a spade, but a hatter a hatter, in a lyrical apostrophe; — this, in spite of all the airs of inspiration, is not the way to do it. It may be very wrong, and very wounding to a respectable branch of industry, but the word " hatter " cannot be used seriously in emotional verse; not to understand this, is to have no literary tact; and I would, for his own sake, that this were the only inadmissible expression with which Whitman had bedecked his pages. The book teems with similar comicalities; and, to the reader who is determined to take it from that side only, presents a perfect carnival of fun.

A good deal of this is the result of theory playing its usual vile trick upon the artist. It is because he is a Democrat that Whitman must have in the hatter. If you may say Admiral, he reasons, why may you not say Hatter? One man is as good as another, and it is the business of the " great poet " to show poetry in the life of the one as well as the other. A most incontrovertible sentiment surely, and one which nobody would think of controverting, where — and here is the point — where any beauty has been shown. But how, where that is not the case? where the hatter is simply introduced, as God made him and as his fellow-men have miscalled him, at the crisis of a high-flown rhapsody? And what are we to say, where a man of Whitman's notable capacity for putting things in a bright, picturesque, and novel way, simply gives up the attempt, and indulges, with apparent exultation, in an inventory of trades or implements, with no more colour or coherence than so many index-words

out of a dictionary? I do not know that we can say anything, but that it is a prodigiously amusing exhibition for a line or so. The worst of it is, that Whitman must have known better. The man is a great critic, and, so far as I can make out, a good one; and how much criticism does it require to know that capitulation is not description, or that fingering on a dumb keyboard, with whatever show of sentiment and execution, is not at all the same thing as discoursing music? I wish I could believe he was quite honest with us; but indeed, who was ever quite honest who wrote a book for a purpose? It is a flight beyond the reach of human magnanimity.

One other point, where his means failed him, must be touched upon, however shortly. In his desire to accept all facts loyally and simply, it fell within his programme to speak at some length and with some plainness on what is, for I really do not know what reason, the most delicate of subjects. Seeing in that one of the most serious and interesting parts of life, he was aggrieved that it should be looked upon as ridiculous or shameful. No one speaks of maternity with his tongue in his cheek; and Whitman made a bold push to set the sanctity of fatherhood beside the sanctity of motherhood, and introduce this also among the things that can be spoken of without either a blush or a wink. But the Philistines have been too strong; and, to say truth, Whitman has rather played the fool. We may be thoroughly conscious that his end is improving; that it would be a good thing if a window were opened on these close privacies of life; that on this subject, as on all others, he now and then lets fall a pregnant saying. But we are not satisfied. We feel that he was not the man for so difficult an enterprise. He loses our sympathy in the character of a poet by attracting too much of our attention in that of a Bull in a China Shop. And where, by a little more art, we might have been solem-

nised ourselves, it is too often Whitman alone who is solemn in the face of an audience somewhat indecorously amused.

VI

Lastly, as most important, after all, to human beings in our disputable state, what is that higher prudence which was to be the aim and issue of these deliberate productions?

Whitman is too clever to slip into a succinct formula. If he could have adequately said his say in a single proverb, it is to be presumed he would not have put himself to the trouble of writing several volumes. It was his programme to state as much as he could of the world with all its contradictions, and leave the upshot with God who planned it. What he has made of the world and the world's meanings is to be found at large in his poems. These altogether give his answers to the problems of belief and conduct; in many ways righteous and high-spirited, in some ways loose and contradictory. And yet there are two passages from the preface to the *Leaves of Grass* which do pretty well condense his teaching on all essential points, and yet preserve a measure of his spirit.

" This is what you shall do," he says in the one, " love the earth, and sun, and animals, despise riches, give alms to every one that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labour to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown, or to any man or number of men; go freely with powerful uneducated persons, and with the young, and mothers of families, read these leaves [his own works] in the open air every season of every year of your life; re-examine all you have been told at school or church, or in any book, and dismiss whatever insults your own soul."

"The prudence of the greatest poet," he adds in the other — and the greatest poet is, of course, himself — "knows that the young man who composedly perilled his life and lost it, has done exceedingly well for himself; while the man who has not perilled his life, and retains it to old age in riches and ease, has perhaps achieved nothing for himself worth mentioning; and that only that person has no great prudence to learn, who has learnt to prefer real long-lived things, and favors body and soul the same, and perceives the indirect surely following the direct, and what evil or good he does leaping onward and waiting to meet him again, and who in his spirit, in any emergency whatever, neither hurries nor avoids death."

There is much that is Christian in these extracts, startlingly Christian. Any reader who bears in mind Whitman's own advice and "dismisses whatever insults his own soul" will find plenty that is bracing, brightening, and chastening to reward him for a little patience at first. It seems hardly possible that any being should get evil from so healthy a book as the *Leaves of Grass,* which is simply comical wherever it falls short of nobility; but if there be any such, who cannot both take and leave, who cannot let a single opportunity pass by without some unworthy and unmanly thought, I should have as great difficulty, and neither more nor less, in recommending the works of Whitman as in lending them Shakespeare, or letting them go abroad outside of the grounds of a private asylum.

LITERATURE AND SCIENCE

MATTHEW ARNOLD

The spirit which should animate the controversial essay is admirably exemplified in this paper of Matthew Arnold's. A large part of Arnold's literary activity was devoted to the censure of standards prevailing among Englishmen, to rebuking the narrowness of their mental outlook and the ugliness of their social life. He preached an ideal which should satisfy the intellectual and aesthetic needs of men as well as the moral, suggesting the study of poetry as the best means of perfecting the human spirit on all its sides. He gave popular currency to such expressions as "culture," "sweetness and light," "the best that has been thought and said in the world." He was often called upon to defend his favorite ideas against men who regarded them as rather too elegant and fastidious for the material conditions of the every-day world. In his arguments with these men Arnold uniformly preserved an air of good breeding and suavity which conformed with the general tenor of his teaching, though in his quiet way he could inflict a sting against which only the thick-skinned were immune. As the foremost champion in his day of the traditional claims of literature in a liberal education, Arnold had also to take up the challenge which the partisans of science were issuing through their most popular representative. In 1880 T. H. Huxley had delivered an address at the opening of Sir Josiah Mason's Science College at Birmingham on the subject of *Science and Culture* in which he had referred to the well known opinions of Arnold and, in effect, claimed for scientific studies a place of equal importance with literature in the education of the ordinary man. It is this argument that Arnold deals with in his essay on *Literature and Science,* and he does so with his usual gracefulness and amenity and scrupulous fairness. It is interesting to note how large a part of the argument turns on the definition of

literature which Arnold adopts, but his fundamental issue with Huxley cannot be reduced to a mere difference in the meaning which they attach to the word "literature." (The essay appeared in *The Nineteenth Century,* August, 1882. It was revised for use as a lecture in the United States and published in *Discourses in America,* 1885.)

LITERATURE AND SCIENCE

PRACTICAL people talk with a smile of Plato and of his absolute ideas; and it is impossible to deny that Plato's ideas do often seem unpractical and impracticable, and especially when one views them in connection with the life of a great work-a-day world like the United States. The necessary staple of the life of such a world Plato regards with disdain; but what becomes of the life of an industrial modern community if you take handicraft and trade and the working professions out of it? The base mechanic arts and handicrafts, says Plato, bring about a natural weakness in the principle of excellence in a man, so that he cannot govern the ignoble growths in him, but nurses them, and cannot understand fostering any other. Those who exercise such arts and trades, as they have their bodies, he says, marred by their vulgar businesses, so they have their souls, too, bowed and broken by them. And if one of these uncomely people has a mind to seek self-culture and philosophy, Plato compares him to a bald little tinker, who has scraped together money, and has got his release from service, and has had a bath, and bought a new coat, and is rigged out like a bridegroom about to marry the daughter of his master who has fallen into poor and helpless estate.

Nor do the working professions fare any better than trade at the hands of Plato. He draws for us an inimitable picture of the working lawyer, and of his life of bondage; he shows how this bondage from his youth up has stunted and warped him, and made him small and crooked of soul, encompassing him with difficulties which he is not man enough to rely on

justice and truth as means to encounter, but has recourse, for help out of them, to falsehood and wrong. And so, says Plato, this poor creature is bent and broken, and grows up from boy to man without a partical of soundness in him, although exceedingly smart and clever in his own esteem.

One cannot refuse to admire the artist who draws these pictures. But we say to ourselves that his ideas show the influence of a primitive and obsolete order of things, when the warrior caste and the priestly caste were alone in honour, and the humble work of the world was done by slaves. We have now changed all that; the modern majority consists in work, as Emerson declares; and in work, we may add, principally of such plain and dusty kind as the work of cultivators of the ground, handicraftsmen, men of trade and business, men of the working professions. Above all is this true in a great industrious community such as that of the United States.

Now education, many people go on to say, is still mainly governed by the ideas of men like Plato, who lived when the warrior caste and the priestly or philosophical class were alone in honour, and the really useful part of the community were slaves. It is an education fitted for persons of leisure in such a community. This education passed from Greece and Rome to the feudal communities of Europe, where also the warrior caste and the priestly caste were alone held in honour, and where the really useful and working part of the community, though not nominally slaves as in the pagan world at large, to plain labour and to industrial pursuits, and not more seriously regarded. And how absurd it is, people end by saying, to inflict this education upon an industrious modern community, where very few indeed are persons of leisure, and the mass to be considered has not leisure, but is bound, for its own great good, and for the great good of the

world at large, to plain labour and to industrial pursuits, and the education in question tends necessarily to make men dissatisfied with these pursuits and unfitted for them!

That is what is said. So far I must defend Plato, as to plead that his view of education and studies is in the general, as it seems to me, sound enough, and fitted for all sorts and conditions of men, whatever their pursuits may be. "An intelligent man," says Plato, "will prize those studies which result in his soul getting soberness, righteousness, and wisdom, and will less value the others." I cannot consider *that* a bad description of the aim of education, and of the motives which should govern us in the choice of studies, whether we are preparing ourselves for a hereditary seat in the English House of Lords or for the pork trade in Chicago.

Still I admit that Plato's world was not ours, that his scorn of trade and handicraft is fantastic, that he had no conception of a great industrial community such as that of the United States, and that such a community must and will shape its education to suit its own needs. If the usual education handed down to it from the past does not suit it, it will certainly before long drop this and try another. The usual education in the past has been mainly literary. The question is whether the studies which were long supposed to be the best for all of us are practically the best now; whether others are not better. The tyranny of the past, many think, weighs on us injuriously in the predominance given to letters in education. The question is raised whether, to meet the needs of our modern life, the predominance ought not now to pass from letters to science; and naturally the question is nowhere raised with more energy than here in the United States. The design of abasing what is called "mere literary instruction and education," and of exalting what is called "sound, extensive, and practical scientific knowledge," is, in this intensely modern world of the United States, even

more perhaps than in Europe, a very popular design, and makes great and rapid progress.

I am going to ask whether the present movement for ousting letters from their old predominance in education, and for transferring the predominance in education to the natural sciences, whether this brisk and flourishing movement ought to prevail, and whether it is likely that in the end it really will prevail. An objection may be raised which I will anticipate. My own studies have been almost wholly in letters, and my visits to the field of the natural sciences have been very slight and inadequate, although those sciences have always strongly moved my curiosity. A man of letters, it will perhaps be said, is not competent to discuss the comparative merits of letters and natural science as means of education. To this objection I reply, first of all, that his incompetence, if he attempts the discussion but is really incompetent for it, will be abundantly visible; nobody will be taken in; he will have plenty of sharp observers and critics to save mankind from that danger. But the line I am going to follow is, as you will soon discover, so extremely simple, that perhaps it may be followed without failure even by one who for a more ambitious line of discussion would be quite incompetent.

Some of you may possibly remember a phrase of mine which has been the object of a good deal of comment; an observation to the effect that in our culture, the aim being *to know ourselves and the world,* we have, as the means to this end, *to know the best which has been thought and said in the world.* A man of science, who is also an excellent writer and the very prince of debaters, Professor Huxley, in a discourse at the opening of Sir Josiah Mason's college at Birmingham, laying hold of this phrase, expanded it by quoting some more words of mine, which are these: "The civilized world is to be regarded as now being, for intellectual and

spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result; and whose members have for their proper outfit a knowledge of Greek, Roman, and Eastern antiquity, and of one another. Special local and temporary advantages being put out of account, that modern nation will in the intellectual and spiritual sphere make most progress, which most thoroughly carries out this programme."

Now on my phrase, thus enlarged, Professor Huxley remarks that when I speak of the above-mentioned knowledge as enabling us to know ourselves and the world, I assert *literature* to contain the materials which suffice for thus making us know ourselves and the world. But it is not by any means clear, says he, that after having learnt all which ancient and modern literatures have to tell us, we have laid a sufficiently broad and deep foundation for that criticism of life, that knowledge of ourselves and the world, which constitutes culture. On the contrary, Professor Huxley declares that he finds himself " wholly unable to admit that either nations or individuals will really advance, if their outfit draws nothing from the stores of physical science. An army without weapons of precision, and with no particular base of operations, might more hopefully enter upon a campaign on the Rhine, than a man, devoid of a knowledge of what physical science has done in the last century, upon a criticism of life."

This shows how needful it is for those who are to discuss any matter together to have a common understanding as to the sense of the terms they employ, — how needful, and how difficult. What Professor Huxley says, implies just the reproach which is so often brought against the study of *belles lettres*, as they are called: that the study is an elegant one, but slight and ineffectual; a smattering of Greek and Latin and other ornamental things, of little use for anyone whose

object is to get at truth, and to be a practical man. So, too, M. Renan talks of the "superficial humanism" of a school-course which treats us as if we were all going to be poets, writers, preachers, orators, and he opposes this humanism to positive science, or the critical search after truth. And there is always a tendency in those who are remonstrating against the predominance of letters in education, to understand by letters *belles lettres,* and by *belles lettres* a superficial humanism, the opposite of science or true knowledge.

But when we talk of knowing Greek and Roman antiquity, for instance, which is the knowledge people have called the humanities, I for my part mean a knowledge which is something more than a superficial humanism, mainly decorative. "I call all teaching *scientific,*" says Wolf, the critic of Homer, "which is systematically laid out and followed up to its original sources. For example: a knowledge of classical antiquity is scientific when the remains of classical antiquity are correctly studied in the original languages." There can be no doubt that Wolf is perfectly right; that all learning is scientific which is systematically laid out and followed up to its original sources, and that a genuine humanism is scientific.

When I speak of knowing Greek and Roman antiquity, therefore, as a help to knowing ourselves and the world, I mean more than a knowledge of so much vocabulary, so much grammar, so many portions of authors in the Greek and Latin languages, I mean knowing the Greeks and Romans, and their life and genius, and what they were and did in the world; what we get from them, and what is its value. That, at least, is the ideal; and when we talk of endeavouring to know Greek and Roman antiquity, as a help to knowing ourselves and the world, we mean endeavouring so to know them as to satisfy this ideal, however much we may still fall short of it.

The same also as to knowing our own and other modern nations, with the like aim of getting to understand ourselves and the world. To know the best that has been thought and said by the modern nations, is to know, says Professor Huxley, " only what modern *literatures* have to tell us; it is the criticism of life contained in modern literature." And yet " the distinctive character of our times, " he urges, " lies in the vast and constantly increasing part which is played by natural knowledge." And how, therefore, can a man, devoid of knowledge of what physical science has done in the last century, enter hopefully upon a criticism of modern life?

Let us, I say, be agreed about the meaning of the terms we are using. I talk of knowing the best which has been thought and uttered in the world; Professor Huxley says this means knowing *literature*. Literature is a large word; it may mean everything written with letters or printed in a book. Euclid's *Elements* and Newton's *Principia* are thus literature. All knowledge that reaches us through books is literature. But by literature Professor Huxley means *belles lettres*. He means to make me say, that knowing the best which has been thought and said by the modern nations is knowing their *belles lettres* and no more. And this is no sufficient equipment, he argues, for a criticism of modern life. But as I do not mean, by knowing ancient Rome, knowing merely more or less of Latin *belles lettres*, and taking no account of Rome's military, and political, and legal, and administrative work in the world; and as, by knowing ancient Greece, I understand knowing her as the giver of Greek art, and the guide to a free and right use of reason and to scientific method, and the founder of our mathematics and physics and astronomy and biology, — I understand knowing her as all this, and not merely knowing certain Greek poems, and histories, and treatises, and speeches, — so as to the knowledge of modern nations also. By knowing modern nations,

I mean not merely knowing their *belles lettres*, but knowing also what has been done by such men as Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Darwin. "Our ancestors learned," says Professor Huxley, "that the earth is the centre of the visible universe, and that man is the cynosure of things terrestrial; and more especially was it inculcated that the course of nature had no fixed order, but that it could be, and constantly was, altered." But for us now, continues Professor Huxley, "the notions of the beginning and the end of the world entertained by our forefathers are no longer credible. It is very certain that the earth is not the chief body in the material universe, and that the world is not subordinated to man's use. It is even more certain that nature is the expression of a definite order, with which nothing interferes." "And yet," he cries, "the purely classical education advocated by the representatives of the humanists in our day gives no inkling of all this!"

In due place and time I will just touch upon that vexed question of classical education; but at present the question is as to what is meant by knowing the best which modern nations have thought and said. It is not knowing their *belles lettres* merely which is meant. To know Italian *belles lettres* is not to know Italy, and to know English *belles lettres* is not to know England. Into knowing Italy and England there comes a great deal more, Galileo and Newton amongst it. The reproach of being a superficial humanism, a tincture of *belles lettres*, may attach rightly enough to some other disciplines; but to the particular discipline recommended when I proposed knowing the best that has been thought and said in the world, it does not apply. In that best I certainly include what in modern times has been thought and said by the great observers and knowers of nature.

There is, therefore, really no question between Professor Huxley and me as to whether knowing the great results of

the modern scientific study of nature is not required as a part of our culture, as well as knowing the products of literature and art. But to follow the processes by which those results are reached, ought, say the friends of physical science, to be made the staple of education for the bulk of mankind. And here there does arise a question between those whom Professor Huxley calls with playful sarcasm "the Levites of culture," and those whom the poor humanist is sometimes apt to regard as its Nebuchadnezzars.

The great results of the scientific investigation of nature we are agreed upon knowing, but how much of our study are we bound to give to the processes by which those results are reached? The results have their visible bearing on human life. But all the processes, too, all the items of fact, by which those results are reached and established, are interesting. All knowledge is interesting to a wise man, and the knowledge of nature is interesting to all men. It is very interesting to know, that, from the albuminous white of the egg, the chick in the egg gets the materials for its flesh, bones, blood, and feathers; while, from the fatty yolk of the egg, it gets the heat and energy which enable it at length to break its shell and begin the world. It is less interesting, perhaps, but still it is interesting, to know that when a taper burns, the wax is converted into carbonic acid and water. Moreover, it is quite true that the habit of dealing with facts, which is given by the study of nature, is, as the friends of physical science praise it for being, an excellent discipline. The appeal, in the study of nature, is constantly to observation and experiment; not only is it said that the thing is so, but we can be made to see that it is so. Not only does a man tell us that when a taper burns the wax is converted into carbonic acid and water, as a man may tell us, if he likes, that Charon is punting his ferry-boat on the river Styx, or that Victor Hugo is a sublime poet, or Mr. Gladstone the

most admirable of statesmen; but we are made to see that the conversion into carbonic acid and water does actually happen. This reality of natural knowledge it is, which makes the friends of physical science contrast it, as a knowledge of things, with the humanist's knowledge, which is, say they, a knowledge of words. And hence Professor Huxley is moved to lay it down that, "for the purpose of attaining real culture, an exclusively scientific education is at least as effectual as an exclusively literary education." And a certain President of the Section for Mechanical Science in the British Association is, in Scripture phrase, "very bold," and declares that if a man, in his mental training, "has substituted literature and history for natural science, he has chosen the less useful alternative." But whether we go these lengths or not, we must all admit that in natural science the habit gained of dealing with facts is a most valuable discipline, and that every one should have some experience of it.

More than this, however, is demanded by the reformers. It is proposed to make the training in natural science the main part of education, for the great majority of mankind at any rate. And here, I confess, I part company with the friends of physical science, with whom up to this point I have been agreeing. In differing from them, however, I wish to proceed with the utmost caution and diffidence. The smallness of my own acquaintance with the disciplines of natural science is ever before my mind, and I am fearful of doing these disciplines an injustice. The ability and pugnacity of the partisans of natural science make them formidable persons to contradict. The tone of tentative inquiry, which befits a being of dim faculties and bounded knowledge, is the tone I would wish to take and not to depart from. At present it seems to me, that those who are for giving to natural knowledge, as they call it, the chief place in the education of the majority of mankind, leave one im-

portant thing out of their account: the constitution of human nature. But I put this forward on the strength of some facts not at all recondite, very far from it; facts capable of being stated in the simplest possible fashion, and to which, if I so state them, the man of science will, I am sure, be willing to allow their due weight.

Deny the facts altogether, I think, he hardly can. He can hardly deny, that when we set ourselves to enumerate the powers which go to the building up of human life, and say that they are the power of conduct, the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, and the power of social life and manners, — he can hardly deny that this scheme, though drawn in rough and plain lines enough, and not pretending to scientific exactness, does yet give a fairly true representation of the matter. Human nature is built up by these powers; we have the need for them all. When we have rightly met and adjusted the claims of them all, we shall then be in a fair way for getting soberness and righteousness, with wisdom. This is evident enough, and the friends of physical science would admit it.

But perhaps they may not have sufficiently observed another thing: namely, that the several powers just mentioned are not isolated, but there is, in the generality of mankind, a perpetual tendency to relate them one to another in divers ways. With one such way of relating them I am particularly concerned now. Following our instinct for intellect and knowledge, we acquire pieces of knowledge; and presently, in the generality of men, there arises the desire to relate these pieces of knowledge to our sense for conduct, to our sense for beauty, — and there is weariness and dissatisfaction if the desire is balked. Now in this desire lies, I think, the strength of that hold which letters have upon us.

All knowledge is, as I said just now, interesting; and even items of knowledge which from the nature of the case cannot

well be related, but must stand isolated in our thoughts, have their interest. Even lists of exceptions have their interest. If we are studying Greek accents, it is interesting to know that *pais* and *pas*, and some other monosyllables of the same form of declension, do not take the circumflex upon the last syllable of the genitive plural, but vary, in this respect, from the common rule. If we are studying physiology, it is interesting to know that the pulmonary artery carries dark blood and the pulmonary vein carries bright blood, departing in this respect from the common rule for the division of labour between the veins and the arteries. But every one knows how we seek naturally to combine the pieces of our knowledge together, to bring them under general rules, to relate them to principles; and how unsatisfactory and tiresome it would be to go on forever learning lists of exceptions, or accumulating items of fact which must stand isolated.

Well, that same need of relating our knowledge, which operates here within the sphere of our knowledge itself, we shall find operating, also, outside that sphere. We experience, as we go on learning and knowing, — the vast majority of us experience, — the need of relating what we have learned and known to the sense which we have in us for conduct, to the sense which we have in us for beauty.

A certain Greek prophetess of Mantineia in Arcadia, Diotima by name, once explained to the philosopher Socrates that love, and impulse, and bent of all kinds, is, in fact, nothing else but the desire in men that good should forever be present to them. This desire for good, Diotima assured Socrates, is our fundamental desire, of which fundamental desire every impulse in us is only some one particular form. And therefore this fundamental desire it is, I suppose, — this desire in men that good should be forever present to them, — which acts in us when we feel the impulse for relating our knowledge to our sense for conduct and to our sense for

beauty. At any rate, with men in general the instinct exists. Such is human nature. And the instinct, it will be admitted, is innocent, and human nature is preserved by our following the lead of its innocent instincts. Therefore, in seeking to gratify this instinct in question, we are following the instinct of self-preservation in humanity.

But, no doubt, some kinds of knowledge cannot be made to directly serve the instinct in question, cannot be directly related to the sense for beauty, to the sense for conduct. These are instrument-knowledges; they lead on to other knowledges, which can. A man who passes his life in instrument-knowledges is a specialist. They may be invaluable as instruments to something beyond, for those who have the gift thus to employ them; and they may be disciplines in themselves wherein it is useful for every one to have some schooling. But it is inconceivable that the generality of men should pass all their mental life with Greek accents or with formal logic. My friend Professor Sylvester, who is one of the first mathematicians in the world, holds transcendental doctrines as to the virtue of mathematics, but those doctrines are not for common men. In the very Senate House and heart of our English Cambridge I once ventured, though not without an apology for my profaneness, to hazard the opinion that for the majority of mankind a little of mathematics, even, goes a long way. Of course this is quite consistent with their being of immense importance as an instrument to something else; but it is the few who have the aptitude for thus using them, not the bulk of mankind.

The natural sciences do not, however, stand on the same footing with these instrument-knowledges. Experience shows us that the generality of men will find more interest in learning that, when a taper burns, the wax is converted into carbonic acid and water, or learning the explanation of the phenomenon of dew, or in learning how the circulation

of the blood is carried on, than they find in learning that the genitive plural of *pais* and *pas* does not take the circumflex on the termination. And one piece of natural knowledge is added to another, and others are added to that, and at last we come to propositions so interesting as Mr. Darwin's famous proposition that " our ancestor was a hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits." Or we come to propositions of such reach and magnitude as those which Professor Huxley delivers, when he says that the notions of our forefathers about the beginning and the end of the world were all wrong, and that nature is the expression of a definite order with which nothing interferes.

Interesting, indeed, these results of science are, important they are, and we should all of us be acquainted with them. But what I now wish you to mark is, that we are still, when they are propounded to us and we receive them, we are still in the sphere of intellect and knowledge. And for the generality of men there will be found, I say, to arise, when they have duly taken in the proposition that their ancestor was " a hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits," there will be found to arise an invincible desire to relate this proposition to the sense in us for conduct, and to the sense in us for beauty. But this the men of science will not do for us, and will hardly even profess to do. They will give us other pieces of knowledge, other facts, about other animals and their ancestors, or about plants, or about stones, or about stars; and they may finally bring us to those great " general conceptions of the universe, which are forced upon us all," says Professor Huxley, " by the progress of physical science." But still it will be *knowledge* only which they give us; knowledge not put for us into relation with our sense for conduct, our sense for beauty, and touched with emotion by being so put; not thus put for us,

and therefore, to the majority of mankind, after a certain while, unsatisfying, wearying.

Not to the born naturalist, I admit. But what do we mean by a born naturalist? We mean a man in whom the zeal for observing nature is so uncommonly strong and eminent, that it marks him off from the bulk of mankind. Such a man will pass his life happily in collecting natural knowledge and reasoning upon it, and will ask for nothing, or hardly anything, more. I have heard it said that the sagacious and admirable naturalist whom we lost not very long ago, Mr. Darwin, once owned to a friend that for his part he did not experience the necessity for two things which most men find so necessary to them, — religion and poetry; science and the domestic affections, he thought, were enough. To a born naturalist, I can well understand that this should seem so. So absorbing is his occupation with nature, so strong his love for his occupation, that he goes on acquiring natural knowledge and reasoning upon it, and has little time or inclination for thinking about getting it related to the desire in man for conduct, the desire in man for beauty. He relates it to them for himself as he goes along, so far as he feels the need; and he draws from the domestic affections all the additional solace necessary. But then Darwins are extremely rare. Another great and admirable master of natural knowledge, Faraday, was a Sandemanian. That is to say, he related his knowledge to his instinct for conduct and to his instinct for beauty, by the aid of that respectable Scottish sectary, Robbert Sandeman. And so strong, in general, is the demand of religion and poetry to have their share in a man, to associate themselves with his knowing, and to relieve and rejoice it, that, probably, for one man among us with the disposition to do as Darwin did in this respect, there are at least fifty with the disposition to do as Faraday.

Education lays hold upon us, in fact, by satisfying this de-

mand. Professor Huxley holds up to scorn mediæval education, with its neglect of the knowledge of nature, its poverty even of literary studies, its formal logic devoted to " showing how and why that which the Church said was true must be true." But the great mediæval universities were not brought into being, we may be sure, by the zeal for giving a jejune and contemptible education. Kings have been their nursing fathers, and queens have been their nursing mothers, but not for this. The mediæval universities came into being, because the supposed knowledge, delivered by Scripture and the Church, so deeply engaged men's hearts, by so simply, easily, and powerfully relating itself to their desire for conduct, their desire for beauty. All other knowledge was dominated by this supposed knowledge and was subordinated to it, because of the surpassing strength of the hold which it gained upon the affections of men, by allying itself profoundly with their sense for conduct, their sense for beauty.

But now, says Professor Huxley, conceptions of the universe fatal to the notions held by our forefathers have been forced upon us by physical science. Grant to him that they are thus fatal, that the new conceptions must and will soon become current everywhere, and that every one will finally perceive them to be fatal to the beliefs of our forefathers. The need of humane letters, as they are truly called, because they serve the paramount desire in men that good should be forever present to them, — the need of humane letters, to establish a relation between the new conceptions, and our instinct for beauty, our instinct for conduct, is only the more visible. The Middle Age could do without humane letters, as it could do without the study of nature, because its supposed knowledge was made to engage its emotions so powerfully. Grant that the supposed knowledge disappears, its power being made to engage the emotions will of course dis-

appear along with it, — but the emotions themselves, and their claim to be engaged and satisfied, will remain. Now if we find by experience that humane letters have an undeniable power of engaging the emotions, the importance of humane letters in a man's training becomes not less, but greater, in proportion to the success of modern science in extirpating what it calls " mediæval thinking."

Have humane letters, then, have poetry and eloquence, the power here attributed to them of engaging the emotions, and do they exercise it? And if they have it and exercise it, *how* do they exercise it, so as to exert an influence upon man's sense for conduct, his sense for beauty? Finally, even if they both can and do exert an influence upon the senses in question, how are they to relate to them the results, — the modern results, — of natural science? All these questions may be asked. First, have poetry and eloquence the power of calling out the emotions? The appeal is to experience. Experience shows that for the vast majority of men, for mankind in general, they have the power. Next, do they exercise it? They do. But then, *how* do they exercise it so as to affect man's sense for conduct, his sense for beauty? And this is perhaps a case for applying the Preacher's words: " Though a man labor to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea, farther, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it." * Why should it be one thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say, " Patience is a virtue," and quite another thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say with Homer,

τλητὸν γὰρ Μοῖραι θυμὸν θέσαν ἀνθρώποισιν — †

" for an enduring heart have the destinies appointed to the children of men " ? Why should it be one thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say with the philosopher Spi-

* *Ecclesiastes*, viii, 17. † *Iliad*, xxiv, 49.

noza, *Felicitas in eo consistit quo homo suum esse conservare potest* — " Man's happiness consists in his being able to preserve his own essence," and quite another thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say with the Gospel, " What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, forfeit himself? " How does this difference of effect arise? I cannot tell, and I am not much concerned to know; the important thing is that it does arise, and that we can profit by it. But how, finally, are poetry and eloquence to exercise the power of relating the modern results of natural science to man's instinct for conduct, his instinct for beauty? And here again I answer that I do not know *how* they will exercise it, but that they can and will exercise it I am sure. I do not mean that modern philosophical poets and modern philosophical moralists are to come and relate for us, in express terms, the results of modern scientific research to our instinct for conduct, our instinct for beauty. But I mean that we shall find, as a matter of experience, if we know the best that has been thought and uttered in the world, we shall find that the art and poetry and eloquence of men who lived, perhaps, long ago, who had the most limited natural knowledge, who had the most erroneous conceptions about many important matters, we shall find that this art, and poetry, and eloquence, have in fact not only the power of refreshing and delighting us, they have also the power — such is the strength and worth, in essentials, of their authors' criticism of life, — they have a fortifying, and elevating, and quickening, and suggestive power, capable of wonderfully helping us to relate the results of modern science to our need for conduct, our need for beauty. Homer's conceptions of the physical universe were, I imagine, grotesque; but really, under the shock of hearing from modern science that " the world is not subordinated to man's use, and that man is not the cynosure of things terrestrial," I could, for

my own part, desire no better comfort that Homer's line which I quoted just now,

τλητὸν γὰρ Μοῖραι θυμὸν θέσαν ἀνθρώποισιν —

" for an enduring heart have the destinies appointed to the children of men " !

And the more that men's minds are cleared, the more that the results of science are frankly accepted, the more that poetry and eloquence come to be received and studied as what in truth they really are, — the criticism of life by gifted men, alive and active with extraordinary power at an unusual number of points; — so much the more will the value of humane letters, and of art also, which is an utterance having a like kind of power with theirs, be felt and acknowledged, and their place in education be secured.

Let us therefore, all of us, avoid indeed as much as possible any invidious comparison between the merits of humane letters, as means of education, and the merits of the natural sciences. But when some President of a Section for Mechanical Science insists on making the comparison, and tells us that " he who in his training has substituted literature and history for natural science has chosen the less useful alternative," let us make answer to him that the student of humane letters only, will, at least, know also the great general conceptions brought in by modern physical science; for science, as Professor Huxley says, forces them upon us all. But the student of the natural sciences only, will, by our very hypothesis, know nothing of humane letters; not to mention that in setting himself to be perpetually accumulating natural knowledge, he sets himself to do what only specialists have in general the gift for doing genially. And so he will probably be unsatisfied, or at any rate incomplete, and even more incomplete than the student of humane letters only.

I once mentioned in a school-report, how a young man in one of our English training colleges having to paraphrase the passage in *Macbeth* beginning,

> Can'st thou not minister to a mind diseased?

turned this line into, " Can you not wait upon the lunatic? " And I remarked what a curious state of things it would be, if every pupil of our national schools knew, let us say, that the moon is two thousand one hundred and sixty miles in diameter, and thought at the same time that a good paraphrase for

> Can'st thou not minister to a mind diseased?

was, " Can you not wait upon the lunatic? " If one is driven to choose, I think I would rather have a young person ignorant about the moon's diameter, but aware that " Can you not wait upon the lunatic? " is bad, than a young person whose education had been such as to manage things the other way.

Or to go higher than the pupils of our national schools. I have in my mind's eye a member of our British Parliament who comes to travel here in America, who afterwards relates his travels, and who shows a really masterly knowledge of the geology of this great country and of its mining capabilities, but who ends by gravely suggesting that the United States should borrow a prince from our Royal Family, and should make him their king, and should create a House of Lords of great landed proprietors after the pattern of ours; and then America, he thinks, would have her future happily and perfectly secured. Surely, in this case, the President of the Section for Mechanical Science would himself hardly say that our member of Parliament, by concentrating himself upon geology and mineralogy, and so on, and not attending

to literature and history, had "chosen the more useful alternative."

If then there is to be separation and option between humane letters on the one hand, and the natural sciences on the other, the great majority of mankind, all who have not exceptional and overpowering aptitudes for the study of nature, would do well, I cannot but think, to choose to be educated in humane letters rather than in the natural sciences. Letters will call out their being at more points, will make them live more.

I said that before I ended I would just touch on the question of classical education, and I will keep my word. Even if literature is to retain a large place in our education, yet Latin and Greek, say the friends of progress, will certainly have to go. Greek is the grand offender in the eyes of these gentlemen. The attackers of the established course of study think that against Greek, at any rate, they have irresistible arguments. Literature may perhaps be needed in education, they say; but why on earth should it be Greek literature? Why not French or German? Nay, "has not an Englishman models in his own literature of every kind of excellence?" As before, it is not on any weak pleadings of my own that I rely for convincing the gainsayers; it is on the constitution of human nature itself, and on the instinct of self-preservation in humanity. The instinct for beauty is set in human nature, as surely as the instinct for knowledge is set there, or the instinct for conduct. If the instinct for beauty is served by Greek literature and art as it is served by no other literature and art, we may trust to the instinct of self-preservation in humanity for keeping Greek as part of our culture. We may trust to it for even making the study of Greek more prevalent than it is now. Greek will come, I hope, some day to be studied more rationally than at present; but it will be increasingly studied as men increasingly

feel the need in them for beauty, and how powerfully Greek art and Greek literature can serve this need. Women will again study Greek, as Lady Jane Grey did; I believe that in that chain of forts, with which the fair host of the Amazons are now engirdling our English universities, I find that here in America, in colleges like Smith College in Massachusetts, and Vassar College in the State of New York, and in the happy families of the mixed universities out West, they are studying it already.

Defuit una mihi symmetria prisca, — "The antique symmetry was the one thing wanting to me," said Leonardo da Vinci; and he was an Italian. I will not presume to speak for the Americans, but I am sure that, in the Englishman, the want of this admirable symmetry of the Greeks is a thousand times more great and crying than in any Italian. The results of the want show themselves most glaringly, perhaps, in our architecture, but they show themselves, also, in all our art. *Fit details strictly combined, in view of a large general result nobly conceived;* that is just the beautiful *symmetria prisca* of the Greeks, and it is just where we English fail, where all our art fails. Striking ideas we have, and well-executed details we have; but that high symmetry which, with satisfying and delightful effect, combines them, we seldom or never have. The glorious beauty of the Acropolis at Athens did not come from single fine things stuck about on that hill, a statue here, a gateway there; — no, it arose from all things being perfectly combined for a supreme total effect. What must not an Englishman feel about our deficiencies in this respect, as the sense for beauty, whereof this symmetry is an essential element, awakens and strengthens within him! what will not one day be his respect and desire for Greece and its *symmetria prisca,* when the scales drop from his eyes as he walks the London streets, and he sees such a lesson in meanness as the Strand, for instance, in

its true deformity! But here we are coming to our friend Mr. Ruskin's province, and I will not intrude upon it, for he is its very sufficient guardian.

And so we at last find, it seems, we find flowing in favour of the humanities the natural and necessary stream of things, which seemed against them when we started. The "hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits," this good fellow carried hidden in his nature, apparently, something destined to develop into a necessity for humane letters. Nay, more; we seem finally to be even led to the further conclusion that our hairy ancestor carried in his nature, also, a necessity for Greek.

And therefore, to say the truth, I cannot really think that humane letters are in much actual danger of being thrust out from their leading place in education, in spite of the array of authorities against them at this moment. So long as human nature is what it is, their attractions will remain irresistible. As with Greek, so with letters generally: they will some day come, we may hope, to be studied more rationally, but they will not lose their place. What will happen will rather be that there will be crowded into education other matters besides, far too many; there will be, perhaps, a period of unsettlement and confusion and false tendency; but letters will not in the end lose their leading place. If they lose it for a time, they will get it back again. We shall be brought back to them by our wants and aspirations. And a poor humanist may possess his soul in patience, neither strive nor cry, admit the energy and brilliancy of the partisans of physical science, and their present favour with the public, to be far greater than his own, and still have a happy faith that the nature of things works silently on behalf of the studies which he loves, and that, while we shall all have to acquaint ourselves with the great results reached by modern science, and to give

ourselves as much training in its disciplines as we can conveniently carry, yet the majority of men will always require humane letters; and so much the more, as they have the more and the greater results of science to relate to the need in man for conduct, and to the need in him for beauty.

FICTION

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

George Edward Woodberry, poet and critic, was for many years a professor at Columbia University where he enjoyed great popularity among undergraduates as a teacher of literature. A rare enthusiasm for great writing, an understanding of the heart of the world's masterpieces and of their formal beauty as well, a quiet personal charm, and a systematic method of presentation were the qualities which made him a successful lecturer. Among his many volumes of criticism is one on the *Appreciation of Literature* (1907) in which he applies his critical insight and pedagogical skill for the benefit of an uninitiated audience to explain the essence and the importance of the principal literary forms. Fiction, as the most popular form of literature, is in danger of being read with the least seriousness, and therefore Mr. Woodberry is at pains to emphasize the elements that give it dignity and significance.

FICTION

THE art of literature, when it works in prose, does not change its method from that employed in poetry nor is its material different. Prose makes a less rigorous demand upon the reader's attention and ability; but the action of the mind involved is the same as in verse, the aims of study are the same and the modes of appreciation are identical. Art, or the universal form into which reason casts experience by means of the imagination, controls great works of prose as it rules great poems; fiction stands at the head of prose because it is the sphere in which such art works most freely and effectively; and in proportion to the presence of such art is fiction great and enduring. Poetry achieves the extreme of condensation of life and truth, and hence the appreciation of it requires a mind naturally rapid and strong in apprehension; a high-strung nature finds poetry fitted to it; but the reader generally, less intense in mental application and concentration, prefers prose as more adapted to the normal movement of his mind. This choice continues to operate even in prose, and the effort of the mind is relaxed in proportion as formative art is less present in the work and what is told is set forth in its natural and raw state of facts as they occur. Every nation has tales, and primitive people possess a store of folk-lore, but fiction as a special mode of literature develops somewhat late in civilization. It has a literary ancestry, an historic evolution, which can readily be studied, and in its origins it is much mixed with poetry. In our own time it has come to fill so large a portion of the literary field as to be engrossing; it is in a peculiar sense the

people's literature in our democracies, characterized by popular education, by home leisure, and by an extraordinary awakening of curiosity in large masses. It is a powerful means for the spread of information of all kinds and for the propagation of ideas; all knowledge is most interesting when given out in the form of imagination, and the demand for knowledge was never so great as now; it is altogether natural that the novel, the most flexible form of writing for imaginative propaganda, should be the preferred modern form of literature.

If one searches for the occasion of fiction and considers its wide range of topic and interest, it would seem that no more satisfactory answer can be given than mere human curiosity. In response to this, all that is knowable now takes on the form of the novel. In approaching the field choice seems almost impossible, so varied are the interests involved and all with many claims to regard. The young mind, however, has a native instinct of its own grounded in human nature. The first interest of men is in action, in the event, the thing which is done. This is the interest of the boy, of the practical man, of the man whose meditative and fuller spiritual life is only begun. The type of fiction of this sort is *Robinson Crusoe*. It is a tale of the facts of life in a wonderfully interesting form, and the literary life of thousands has begun with it. The more exalted type is the novels of Dumas, where in a romantic form the life of action is set forth with the interest of vividness, surprise and the fascination of adventure. Nothing can be better than Dumas to arouse in a boy the sense of the power of life, the ambition of doing, the wonder of the things that can be done, — the whole charm and marvel of the world of the deed. Romance is at its highest in this field, and the awakening influence of romance on the mind cannot be overvalued; it opens out the roads of all the earth and the seas, and gives the career of

a gallant will in meeting the unknown and finding the hidden treasure of a man's destiny. Herodotus was in history the very type of such spirit as this, and it made his history one of the great books of the world. Travelers often show and breed the spirit of their tales, and the heroes are made of it from the voyage of the Argo to the days of the search for the Pole. In imaginative literature Dumas is the great example, and in the many volumes that bear his name there is endless store of the most inspiriting kind of such action.

The first advance is made when the mind is no longer content with the action in itself, but meditates it, and finds its true interest to lie in what the act reveals of the character of the man who performs it. In other words, character is a higher interest than action, and supplants it as the object of attention in a maturing mind. Character is, in fact, a summary of action and contains both the effect of past and the promise of future acts; it is, as it were, a brief abstract of action, its potentiality. Man here comes into his rights as the leading interest in the scene, independent of the events. Character is necessarily ideal in literature; it is set forth by its ruling passion, and in the beginning is simple rather than complex, since its presentation is limited to that class of action in which its distinction resides; one reason of the effectiveness of character in its more antique or primitive embodiments is this simplicity flowing from the extreme ideality or abstractness of the type. The Greek heroes share somewhat in the trait of being by virtue of which the gods are ideal, each having a function of his own, being an Ajax, Patroclus, Orestes, Jason, Heracles, and hence marked out for his work. Character is thus in its early forms action viewed in one mode, as it were, and compacted into human power, unified, individualized, personified. The act is of interest in itself still, but it is of more interest as being the act of Achilles or Ulysses and as declaring what manner of

men they were. Character is more profound than action, and hence to a mature mind is more engaging. This is especially noticeable in those persons who are named *characters* in our common speech, — the usually eccentric personalities who are peculiarly specimens of human nature out of the ordinary, and by their words or actions give a fresh, piquant, or humorous impression. Without regard to such exceptions, however, character awakes a profound interest because in its types are stored ideals of what men are, the forms cast by the moral habits and the aspirations and experiences of the race, the qualities consonantly to be found within the limits of one personality, the discords possible within the same range; character is thus a compend of the results of life, of its possibilities in the individual, of its fusion in a single mold. In this stage character is not divorced from action, but both are present; the character is seen acting; the actions however various are resumed in the character. The type of such interest, of balance between action and character such that nevertheless the character rather than the action impresses the mind and memory, is given in Sir Walter Scott's novels, and the unique place that Scott holds in English fiction is due to this firm grasp of life in the form of character which is still kept close to action. This is the trait by which his art as a creator is so supreme, though the power with which he seizes the reader also owes much to the intrinsic nature of the character displayed, to its being national in type whether Scotch or English and showing that nationality strongly and finely in essential traits, to its being doubly presented as of the peasant and the noble classes, and in each exemplified with truth to the life of the one and the ideal of the other, and also to its being inclusive in its eccentric or abnormal instances of so much that is plain human nature, so that one may say indeed that no types are so universally true as those which seem most peculiar in his

pages, such as the old antiquary, Norna or the saints of the Covenant. Scott is the great master of character; not that other English novelists have not equaled him in such portrayal, but none have created character upon such a scale, in such profusion, with such social comprehensiveness, and at the same time with such unfailing human reality. In his works one always finds the substance is not the stream of events, however romantic and involved in mystery, but man acting and suffering; not the plot, but the character. There is a perennial attraction in character that does not pertain to mere story; and this mastery of character is the trait which makes Scott to be so often re-read and to be a favorite in later as well as in youthful years.

Character develops a new kind of interest when attention is fastened, not on what it is, but on how it came to be what it is. The internal life here comes to the fore; the evolution of personality, a train of inward phenomena, is substituted for a course of external events as the subject of interest, however much events may be mixed with the story. This study of motivation and internal reaction marks the final stage of the development of the novel in its presentation of life and completes the circuit of its sphere. Psychology, analysis, introspection, characterize it, and it requires in the reader an intellectual interest perhaps stronger than the imaginative interest. The history of a soul, rather as a phase of inward experience than of action, is the focus of attention. The introspective novel in the emotional sphere, the novel of sentiment, is an early form of such analysis and is illustrated in Richardson, but in its higher and more complex examples the psychological novel full-grown naturally allies itself to some theory of morals, some abstract element in religion or ethics, and sets forth life as an education of the character in such a view. The type, perhaps, in which the various constituents are the most clear and at the same time noble, is

George Eliot's *Romola,* in which great and conflicting ideals of life are presented through the medium of the leading characters by a psychological and largely introspective treatment. Her interest in life was that of a philosophical moralist, and her fiction showed increasingly the analytical habit. The simpler blends of character and action in her earlier tales give place in her fully ripened work to a wide and complex exposition of the nature of her persons in which the element of thought finally overweights the narrative. Just as dramatic poetry issues in a philosophical interest, so the novel, as it develops power and grasps life more profoundly and naturally, appeals with greater directness to the intellect in its effort to understand human life. It may develop this intellectual quality in either of the three forms of pure action, of synthetic or of analytic character, but the quality is most pronounced, pervasive and engrossing in the last. In such writers as Henry James and George Meredith it reaches a climax. Literature, moreover, must always be viewed historically as obeying the general law of evolution in society; its movement is constantly toward a representation of the inward nature of life, to bring out man's self-consciousness, to reveal personality. The problems of personality are those which finally engage the mature mind in a highly developed literature, and the psychological novel is the center where this study is most active. This line of development is not peculiar to fiction, but belongs to literature in general, which tends more and more to become a confessional of the soul's experience, a dissection of life, a pursuit of the motives and reactions of the inner world, of the moods and methods of thought and passion in their intimate cells, of all the secrets, in one word, of personality.

The interest of the novel being thus distributed in these three general modes of action, character in action, and personality for its own sake, the story itself may be unfolded

in any one of many ways or by a blend of several, the chief elements being plot, character, situation, dialogue, sentiment, and the like, variously compounded according to the talent and purpose of the writer. A greater emphasis on any one of these elements gives a special quality to the work and makes a particular appeal to some one class of readers whose taste is for that element. Whatever methods be employed, the enduring worth of the novel in its English examples depends much on the success of the writer in giving the scene of life as a whole, in securing the illusion of a full world, or one that at least is complete for the characters inhabiting it. The perfection of this environing of the characters with a world is seen in Shakespeare's plays; and in proportion as the novelists achieve this effect, and at the same time obtain human reality, they show the highest imaginative power, true creative faculty. There is no surer sign of greatness in a novel than this large grasp of general life, the crowded stage, the throng of affairs, the sense of a world of men. It was thus that Dickens began to display his remarkable faculty in *Pickwick Papers,* rendering the various face of English life and manners in a series of loosely connected sketches. Character and manners, seconded by genial good nature and humorousness, make the perennial attraction of that marvelous piece of entertainment, which was the precursor of great novels conceived on more rigorous lines of construction and with more breadth and poignancy of interest, but all alike in this power to render life as a miscellaneous scene of human activity. Scott similarly in his greatest tales never fails to give largeness to his world and to fill it with currents of social life, with events of high interest and with a multitude of persons. Thackeray in a narrower sphere of society follows the same method in *Vanity Fair,* and Fielding in *Tom Jones.* In all these authors the hero counts for little; the particular tale of individuals involved,

the plot, the mere personal story, however well constructed and interesting that part of the work may be, is yet represented as a portion of the world only, a world that embraces them in its larger being. In *David Copperfield* the tale of Emily and that of Agnes divide the interest, but they seem episodes; it is the picture of life as a whole that dwells in the memory. In this larger world it may be character and manners or the interplay of events, it may be superficial movement, as in the picaresque novel generally, or it may be profound social movement, as in the greater historical novels, that holds the front place; but whatever the method, the substance is of the world of men.

The highest degree of universality and inclusiveness is reached in Cervantes's *Don Quixote,* which while remaining a tale of individuals sums up the national scene, the elements of Spain, its genius, its history, and also gives through this the sense of human life in the broad, the truth of human nature as it is everywhere. *Don Quixote* is the greatest of all novels because singly it contains so large a world. In lesser novels of similar type the world set forth does not lose unity, it does not seem partial, but yet it comprehends only some portion of the scene, as in the provincial novel generally, or some strip of time, as in the historical novel. The breadth of the theme makes a large part of the intrinsic value of such novels, which offer an embodiment, for example, of present life, or a panorama of an epoch, or a rehabilitation of an antique age. Irish tales are good in proportion as they give the Irish spirit and environment. Reade's *The Cloister and the Hearth* is a great historical novel because of its breadth of treatment, and Kingsley's *Hypatia* excels because of its comprehensiveness, its being a summary of one moment of ancient life intensely imagined. In all these novels there is a theme, which in a certain sense exceeds and contains the personal theme, a theme of time — of Al-

exandria, of the Middle Ages, of Ireland. It is not at all essential that this outer theme should be rendered with historical accuracy or be true in its details in the sense of fact. What is necessary is that an illusion of truth should be arrived at by fidelity to the general traits of the city, the age, or the land, so that the world of the story shall be representative of what was. One reason of the facility with which the historical novel is written and received is because this outer theme, Rome or Italy or France, is in itself great, and an undying interest of powerful fascination belongs to it independent of the particular tale that may be narrated as a personal history within its limits. Such a theme naturally induces a series, the Jacobite novels of Scott, the Indian and sea-tales of Cooper; each particular story is but one product of it, and no author exhausts it though he may exhaust his own power of dealing with it. The theme, the world of men involved, diminishes in importance in proportion as the particular tale makes head and absorbs attention; but, in general, great novelists give the scene of the world, the picture of life, whether in a contemporary or historical range, the first place in their representation. This is true without reference to the scale of that world; it is, for example, the method of Goldsmith in *The Vicar of Wakefield*. The novel is indeed the form of literary art best adapted to representing man as a social being and to setting forth in imagination social phenomena; this is one reason, also, why its evolution is so late in the history of literature.

The art of literature in passing into the novel does not lose its function of presenting general truth. That is still its main aim. The necessity of doing so, in fact, underlies all that has been said of the part taken in the novel by the scene of life, the illusion that it must give of a world, whether in the sphere of manners or history, not actual but containing the general reality of human events in a particular time

or country and of human nature in its essential traits. There is an epical element, as is plain, in the description which fiction of the sort that has been treated gives of life. When the social theme is less prominently brought forward and the particular story of a few individuals enlists attention for its own sake, then the novel avails itself of the same resources used in dramatic art. It represents the general law of life and the constitution of human nature by means of examples, and the worth of the novel depends, just as in a play, on the simplicity, clearness and profundity with which it accomplishes the task. There is no material difference between the novel and the drama so far as the handling of plot, situation and dialogue are concerned, except that in a novel the writer has a free hand and can use more means of displaying his characters and their career. In George Eliot's *Adam Bede,* for example, there is, it is true, a background of country and clerical life and of religious agitation; but the story is mainly conducted in the fortunes of a few individuals placed in the foreground. It is a tragic history that is related. Its profound interest is its life interest, the illustration it gives of human events, the light it throws on principles of conduct, belief, the operation of wrong, facts of passion, theories of sin and salvation and the like. The story exists and was written for the sake of its teaching power; and this is more manifest than in the drama because in the medium of prose the teaching can be more plainly brought out and emphasized. Such novels are dramatic in their interest; they cover the same tracts of life as the drama, whether in comedy or tragedy, and the mode of mental approach to them is the same, except that the novelist makes understanding of his theme more easy for the reader by the greater fullness of the presentation and by the comment that, whether explicit or implicit, is always to be found in the text. It may be said, indeed, that there is no form of

poetic truth that the novel in one way or another may not present, usually but not always with less intensity; the analysis of the novel discloses the same substance as poetry, the same fundamental human life which is the matter of all literature. Symbolical truth is that which is, perhaps, thought of as most characteristic of poetry; but it exists in the novel quite as plainly and in its most apparent forms. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is a work of fiction which has all its meaning in the spiritual truth which is there set forth in allegory, and it is one of the most widely distributed of English books. The type of the method is, however, rather to be found in Hawthorne. In his short romantic tales it is commonly used, as, for example, in *Rappaccini's Daughter* and *The Artist of the Beautiful,* where the reader who does not interpret the symbols misses the meaning. *The Scarlet Letter* is a still more striking example of the symbolic representation of life; the background of the Puritan world is but slightly indicated by the romancer, but he blazes forth its essence by a series of picturesque scenes that are like a sign language of the imagination. The same author's *Marble Faun* pursues the same method; the world involved is but lamely made out, and so inadequately that even Donatello seems an alien in it, like the rest, but none the less a theory of sin is symbolized by means of it with a refinement and intimacy such that one seems rather to be looking at pictures and statues than listening to a tale of events. To render life by symbols of landscape and idyllic situations belongs peculiarly to poetry, but in the Greek novel it is found as charmingly set forth as in verse, and the pastoral enters as an element into much prose fiction in various forms. In Watts-Dunton's *Aylwin* characteristically poetic modes are prevailingly employed to render gypsy nature. So near is romance to poetry that it often makes the distinct poetic appeal, as, to take a great instance, in Blackmore's *Lorna*

Doone. The lyric, dramatic and epic elements, being fundamental in literature, are all to be found in prose fiction, and the art employed is the same creative imagination constructing an illusory world in order to set forth the general truth of human life.

Fiction, therefore, in its great examples approaches poetry because it uses the same material to the same end and proceeds by the same method of art, universalizing life and formulating it; but it differs from poetry because it is less delicate in the selection of its material, less exacting of a high degree of art in dealing with it, and directed to utilities that poetry ignores. The art of fiction is two-faced; it is both a fine and a useful art; and if on the one hand in works of great genius it comes nigh to the supreme masters of the drama, on the other extreme it neighbors that universal human service of which the modern name is journalism, — the literature of information, propagandism, world-wide curiosity, discussion, speculation, of which it may be said more truly than of any other form of writing that nothing human is alien to it. Journalism is the most catholic form of the written word. The novel is the next most embracing, and its flexibility as a social instrument under present conditions has given it the commanding practical place which it holds among readers. It is by the novel that the life-knowledge of modern peoples is most fully realized to themselves, in every degree of the scale of society, in popular apprehension. This great change was largely effected by the advent of democracy. In the old literature the national tradition and morality were concentrated in the history, real or imaginary, of the aristocratic class with but slight popular elements, and this was handed down in poetry and chronicle and tale; but with the coming of modern democracy the popular life itself came into the field of interest, and literature giving more and more attention to the citizen life ended by assign-

ing to the common lot of men the place which has formerly been held by the aristocracy. The democratizing of literature which began with Richardson and Fielding, in the novel, and with Burns and Wordsworth, in poetry, resulted in the last century in England in a representation of life in all its classes, provinces, and interests, such as no civilization had ever before placed on record about itself. The reading class was democratic, and men like to read about themselves, to see their own lives reflected, their opinions expressed, and their ideals defined; they also desire information about the way other men live whose modes of behavior and thought, though they may be members of the same society, are not well or intimately known; a public thus came into existence for which the minute and detailed portrayal of all sorts and conditions of Englishmen, and every nook of English ground, was interesting. The field of human life covered by the novel became immense in variety and comprehensiveness. There were certain preferred tastes inherent in English society, and the English novel showed these preferences; the writers, too, could deal individually only with such phases of life as they knew; the novel remained socially aristocratic and middle-class, with an episodic attention to the lower state of society, but it faithfully reflected the consciousness of the English people, and the growth of the democracy is shown in the ever increasing emergence of the literature of the least favored, the stricken and abandoned class. Dickens was the leader and marks the powerful entrance of philanthropy into the novel, and the portraiture of the lower class by him and others perhaps made up in genius what it lacked in quantity. The English, however, are not a frank race, and various as their picture of life is in the novel, it is still discreet and controlled. France, in the representation of life given by her novelists, exceeded the English in the comprehensive fulness of the portrayal; both Balzac and Zola at-

tempted a survey of life more systematic and complete than any single English author conceived, and the French novel surpasses the English as an ample expression of human nature in all social degrees and conditions. There was an advantage in the concentration of the national tradition and morality in the old literature which was especially favorable to poetry; on the other hand the dispersion of interest by the democracy through all classes of society and in all parts of the national body creates a stronger social bond, develops humanitarianism and is vastly more informing to the mind. The exposure of human conditions accomplished by the novel is a powerful element in social progress.

The expansion of the historical consciousness of modern society was an element hardly less important than the democratization of fiction as an influence on the development of the novel. What is loosely termed the Gothic revival with its resuscitation of the mediæval age and its discovery of the primitive poetry of the North, and the Hellenic revival with its reinvigoration of Latin studies and its discovery of archæology in the South, opened between them the whole past of Europe through its entire extent, while the developing contact of England with the East brought with it the fiction of the Orient as well as its poetry. History in many forms was pursued in order to unveil the past and the distant, and it laid open new material for the novelist; as soon as Scott had so brilliantly shown that history was most fascinating in the form of imaginative romance, the novel entered upon its career of recreating the past with extraordinary vigor, and it has found in this field a scope and diversity that make the historical novel perhaps the preferred form of the art. The history of the world has been rewritten in the last century as fiction; even what is most recondite and obscure, and belongs to the world of the learned, has been clothed with color and vitality as if con-

temporary, in the tales of Roman Africa, Egypt and Byzantium in which the French especially excel. In the more barbarous parts of history, such as the East of Europe, native writers have reconstructed the past and made it available for other nations. The reader of the historical novel, in fact, without effort commands an intelligent knowledge of the history of the European world and its antecedent classical sources such as would not have been possible even to a scholar in the last age.

The novel thus contains a vast fund of information which it diffuses. It is a teaching power of immense efficiency, and still more useful for the spread of ideas than for the diffusion of facts. It has developed a power of propagandism which has previously been found mainly in eloquent discourse. The type of such use of the novel is Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* In a lower form it is constantly employed as an instrument of discussion. A good example is Brontë's *Jane Eyre,* in which a moral situation is presented in conflict with human law. Every cause finds in the novel a mode of presenting the facts, and advocating the ideas, which it is especially concerned to make known. One of the most precious of human rights, the right to be heard, is practically secured by the wide-spread and habitual employment of fiction as a public forum. All knowledge gains by being put into the form of a tale; it travels faster, it enters the mind more vividly, it enlists the emotions more powerfully. The power of propaganda is one of the chief traits of the novel as a social force. The novel, moreover, vivifies intellectual interest of all kinds. It follows, for example, in the wake of scientific discovery, of exploration, of mere speculation, and forthwith builds a tale on the new ground. The most recent knowledge of foreign lands, wars, industrial adventure, commercial progress, social experiment, is immediately popularized in this form. Every community, every

employment of men, every idea is gathered in this drag-net of the time; the novel has become the epitome of the modern world.

In the case of a form of literature so variously characterized, so miscellaneously reproductive of experience and in its mass hardly to be divided from life itself, the reader finds himself bewildered and choice is difficult. The literary principle of worth is plain, but other values enter in, and disturb and deflect the decision of the mind. The utilities of reading are so many, and in some cases so attractive, that the confinement of choice by the principle of art is often felt to be a hardship and to result in substantial loss. To state the principle broadly, fiction as an art has worth in proportion to the fulness of its representation, to the arc of life it includes within a single work, where the treatment is extensive in method, or to the intensity of its representation, to the power of life it includes, when the treatment is intensive. The more of life, in extension or intension, that any book has, the greater is the book. This is the general principle, true of all literature, because the literary art has for its end to concentrate life and truth by the use of the imagination in examples that are finally interpreted by the mind, consciously or unconsciously, as universal symbols. Those novels are highest in literary interest which accomplish this purpose with most fulness. *Don Quixote* has already been cited as the type of such greatness and rank; and, in general, the sign of fulness of meaning in the extensive sense is, as has been said, the presence in the novel of the great scene of life. Ideal literature, greatly inclusive of life and character, holds the first place in fiction as in poetry.

The English novel of itself yields some guidance. It is, perhaps, the purest growth of English literary genius, that in which native power is most unmixed with foreign elements. English poetic genius is largely indebted to foreign

grafts, to the continental mediums of the old tradition in its antique sources. English poetry cannot be very intelligently understood except by a classically educated mind, and its creators directly or indirectly were bred of the South of Europe and heirs of the Mediterranean. With English fiction the case is different. Character has always held a favored place in the minds of the English; whether in the form of practical action or of moral precept a prime value has been placed upon it; the English mind is prepossessed with the moral meaning of life, with its practical issues, with its ethical reality. Reality, too, in its obvious forms of fact, event, fixed trait, is a large ingredient in the interest the English take in life; they are attached to the soil and to the characters that grow out of it, to human nature as modified and modeled by it, to the strength of life that thrives there. English life, in the home-bred, high-flavored, obvious form was the subject of the English novel from the first moment of its greatness, and a predominant interest in character controlled it. The tradition of Fielding was never lost; the handling of genuine human events for the display of character, and both in close neighborhood with the soil, is characteristic of the English novel in the great line of its development. It followed from this that the novel entered easily into national literature. What makes literature national is its embodiment of the national tradition and the national morality; it is plain at a glance that Fielding and Scott accomplished this with great power, and Dickens and Thackeray likewise in their turn; in these four writers their countrymen are presented with extraordinary fidelity in the scene of their life and with reality. It is the life of England and of Englishmen, of Scotland and of Scotchmen, that is read in these books; and the minor novelists, Goldsmith, Smollett, Sterne, Austen, Brontë, supplement the great masters with a picture of life similarly English-bred. The work of George

Eliot and Kingsley is most interesting, and is either great or approaches greatness, in proportion as it adds to the stream of national tradition, in the scene of English life, and of national morality, in the display of manners and ideals of plain English mold. The reader who is seeking the substance of life in the novel should keep close to this great tradition of English life in the books where it is most vividly put forth and is felt to be most national. A national literature is always great, because it contains the ideal form of the nation reminiscently beheld. Those English novels have the most worth in which life and character are most nationally portrayed with breadth, reality, and affection; they are found in the line of the standard tradition.

What makes literature standard is that it permanently embodies the national consciousness in its historic forms as each ceases to be contemporary and passes into memory. Standard literature is consequently always partially out-of-date and falls to the scholar or to the reader who desires to realize the past. It often happens, however, that standard literature long retains a living relation to successive generations by virtue of its containing some element that does not grow out of date, and literature is great in proportion as it contains this principle of life. Achilles and Ulysses, for example, continued through ages to be real and nigh to the Greek consciousness of life. The novel, inasmuch as it is more mixed with contemporary and transitory elements than poetry, passes more quickly into the past; but the standard English novel still retains many characters and much action that are as contemporary to our minds as when the story was originally written. A man, nevertheless, must live and die with his own generation, and the literature that is really out of date need not greatly concern him, except so far as he desires to be informed about the past of his people and their writers.

A second guiding principle in the field of the novel may be found in the power it has to expand the mind and interests of the reader. The office of the novel in expanding knowledge, in making the world known to itself in all parts, has been touched on; in the individual case the reader may be guided in his choice in proportion as he finds the material and power of the writer working this effect in himself. This expansion of the mind is most valuable when it takes place in the world of humanity at large so that the reader becomes better informed with regard to the common lot of mankind and is thereby made more humane, more fully man, more sympathetically at one with his fellows. Perhaps the greatest humanitarian novel is Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables,* both by the scope of its scene and action and by the ideas that shape and create the story. In a broader way the Russian novel, taken in its whole career, gives a revelation of the lot of mankind which is to the reader like the discovery of a new land, and in connection with it stand humanitarian ideas closely joined; the expansion both of knowledge and of sympathy is most serviceable and the literary type of the Russian novel is itself high both for plot, character and passion. The power of expansion, however, does not reside only in foreign novels or depend on a new and distant scene or a strange mode of life. Any great experience expands the mind; and, in a secondary way, to read of a great experience has the same effect. The experience of a great love is the most transforming power in life, and hence no type of story is so constant, so sure of interest, or so valuable. This is the fascination of *Lorna Doone,* and of many another tale. The experience of a great repentance makes the attraction of *The Scarlet Letter.* The great novels of tragedy and passion have their power over the reader in the sense of this experience, which he lives through in imagination and takes partially at least to himself. If the mind expands either in in-

formation and sympathy, leading to a fuller comprehension of the common lot, or in realizing the great experiences of life, the reader may well be assured that he is in a right path.

A third working principle, and one of the widest application, is recreation. Fiction is the home of mental leisure; and nowhere is the fundamental aim of literature, the will to please, pursued so purely and with such unrestricted freedom. Men take their recreation variously, and no rule can be laid down. Some enjoy reading about themselves and their neighbors and seeing life as they know it, in a book. The more common way is to desire a change of scene, a new environment and a tale that shall take us out of ourselves. The presence of excitement in the story is the surest means of causing absorption of interest and securing that release from the every-day world which is sought, a break in the monotony of life and affairs, or rest from its overtaxing business; and in the present time often the wish is to escape from the world of thought. The great hold of the novel of adventure on the public is due to such desires; it is action that is wanted, or character which puts all of itself into deeds and is scarcely known except as it acts. This is the simplest form of fiction and makes the least demand upon the reader, while it allows him to lead in fancy and sympathy a life which is stirring and at the same time irresponsible. The novel of adventure holds the first place in the literature of recreation and is to be found wherever tales are told. It has the advantage of always having a story to tell; it blends with the great events and famous personages of history and also with the unknown sea and land, with lonely peril, with villainy of every kind; it taxes human energy and resource to the utmost, and appeals to that love of the heroic which is the most deep-seated of the noble instincts of man. It is not surprising that it should always have been the prime element in fiction as it was in poetry, the literature of the

deed done in danger, whether for war or love or in the contest with the elements, the story of man's gallantry, trial and rescue in every race and under every sky. To read it is to return to the youth of the world and of life, to dip in action and to forget, for the dream of action is the most complete of dreams; it "covers one all over, thoughts and all," like Sancho's sleep. Such romance, too, recreates the vigor and cheerfulness of life, as it stimulates youthful energy; it is refreshing, not merely by change, but by its electrical charging of the original instincts of man and the excitement it imparts to them. Romance believes in man and in life, as youth does, and develops positive power, assertion and daring in the temperament that it imbues; it repairs the waste of faith and hope and resolution, as poetry does, and gives back to instinct what thought has taken from its power. The war sagas of old, the minstrel's tale in the baron's hall, the episodes and cycles of chivalry were such a reinvigoration in primitive days, and modern romance in its infinitely varied forms, from peril by sea and land to peril for a faith, a crown or a cause, is the lineal descendant of these and serves in modern life a like need. It is that part of literature where impulse has the largest play; and it gives freedom of movement and a life in the imagination to impulses that life confines; it enlarges life and provides that supplement to reality which human nature requires for its wholeness. The inexhaustible demand for it shows that it is grounded on a real need.

The tale of adventure, in every period of literature, has been thus highly prized as a form of recreation. It blends naturally with the tale of mystery, or the wonder-tale, which perhaps holds the second place in general favor. In its form of pure marvel the treasure-house of this sort of literature is *The Arabian Nights*. They suggest childhood to us, and the childhood of a race also, but the experience of a mature and

old race is curiously mixed with the picture of life they represent. English literature is rich in translations, adaptations and imitations of this oriental play of fancy, actual manners and wisdom; they make an interesting episode in the history of the English genius so eagerly assimilative of every foreign strain and closely in contact with the Oriental people. Pure marvel, however, is too baseless a fabric for the English temperament, and the tale of mystery in the history of the English novel has preferred the form in which the mystery is solved. The episode of what is called the Gothic romance, Walpole's *Castle of Otranto,* with its successors by Mrs. Radcliffe and Monk Lewis, introduced the wonder-story that is solved, the supernatural there being explained by mechanical means; it was followed by the mystery tales of Poe, in the next generation, and the detective tale, but the explanation involved in these is a weakness in interest. The tales are discredited by the completeness of the explanation, and it is only by the subtlety of the reasoning involved and something abnormal in the circumstances, as in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue,* that they maintain a lasting life in literature. Mystery, as an enduring theme, prefers its old lairs; in the cruder form it requires the Rosicrucians, the secret orders and problems, the theosophists of India, and leaves something still doubtful and inscrutable at the end; or it contents itself with the interest of a well-concealed plot which finally discloses its secret to the relief of the mind. Science and the scientific spirit killed the wonder-story in its supernatural and merely marvelous form, its fairy and spirit play; nor has scientific marvel in becoming itself the subject of imagination at all filled the old place which it emptied of meaning. The sea is the natural abode of mystery, but the sea-novel has not been especially successful in retaining that element from the days before the oceans were known and charted. Mystery is, however, so

inherent in life, and it is so fascinating to men, that its older forms will long retain imaginative power, and in the greatest novels in which it takes on a moral form, the mystery of man's life and fates, it will remain imbedded, not merely as an artifice of the plot, but as the substance of the meaning.

Mystery and romance do not exhaust the interest of the novel of recreation, which has infinite variety; but they sufficiently illustrate its nature. A third sort should, perhaps, be noticed; the tale which by its representation of quiet life and humble folks, like the pastoral idyl of old days, acts rather as an anodyne. Such stories of simplicity are numerous in literature; they are, indeed, a perennial product in all lands and times and often are wrought with high and enduring art. The old country life of England and America affords them as a product of the native soil, and in the fiction of the south of Europe they make one of the purest elements of charm, as in the Sicilian and Sardinian novel of the day. The life of people near the soil, truly told in its human interests, secures almost without effort some of the best results of art by virtue of what it excludes and the simplicity and truth of what remains. Reality, such as this, mystery and romance are, perhaps, the most important forms of recreation afforded by the novel; they are, at least, characteristic forms. A long catalogue would not exhaust the varieties of interest here to be found; the novel, as was said, is the epitome of modern life. At last the question of approach to the novel is one of individual liking, temperament, experience, inclination and necessities; seriously read, the novel is a study of life; practically it is a mode of recreation, entertainment, amusement. Desultory reading is one of the most useful as well as pleasurable of literary pursuits; and nowhere is it more in place or more fruitful than in the novel.

THE HUMANISM OF GEORGE MEREDITH

STUART SHERMAN

For fifteen years and more, till his too early death, Stuart Sherman was the most significant literary critic in America. From the detached vantage-ground of his position at the University of Illinois, where he taught English literature for seventeen years, he issued deliberate and beautifully finished assaults against the vulnerable points of his contemporaries, waging the battle in the name of the traditions and ideals transmitted by the Puritan founders of America. His attitude was determined by an appreciation of the enduring value of those traditions for American democracy, though it may also have been colored by resentment against the flippancy and shallowness of the attacks to which Puritanism was being subjected by the younger generation. It was with a view of animating the forces of genuine democracy that a large part of his writing was done, even at a time when his opponents were speaking of him as an unmitigated conservative. How mistaken they were in this view they discovered when Sherman inaugurated his editorship of the literary review of the *New York Herald-Tribune* (*Books*) in 1924, and in a series of weekly essays revealed such a sympathetic interest in the writers of his own day that he at once came to be regarded as the most valuable commentator and interpreter of the new forces in literature. He was achieving the kind of authority which had been enjoyed by no critic in America before him (Lowell's prestige was based on criticism of a historic literature) when he was cut off by a tragic death.

Sherman began his career as a disciple of Matthew Arnold and like Arnold identified criticism of literature with criticism of civilization. In George Meredith he found a subject notably congenial

and fitted to elicit his own high-minded ideas of the dignity and beauty which man might derive from life. (The essay on George Meredith appeared in *The Nation,* June 3, 1909, and was reprinted in revised form as *The Humanism of George Meredith* in *On Contemporary Literature,* 1917.)

THE HUMANISM OF GEORGE MEREDITH

THE refusal of the authorities of Westminster Abbey to allow George Meredith to sleep among England's half-canonized dead was by no means surprising. In spite of the indorsement of the Society of Authors and the Prime Minister, the future of his reputation still remains somewhat problematic. If he had died twenty-five years ago, though the work on which his fame rests had then been accomplished, it is doubtful whether the general voice would have decreed him this solemn tribute. Indeed, from his first appearance in literature down to the time of his death no writer of his power had received less recognition for his virtues or more persistent praise for his faults. George Eliot, Swinburne, Watts-Dunton, and a following of enthusiasts felt his might, and for the most part tried to persuade the world that he was a great literary artist. Others asserted with equal vehemence that he was an incoherent thinker, making his artificial, choked, and stuttering novels the vehicle for a mass of epigram. The so-called man in the street, if he chanced to overhear the discussion, promptly decided that it did not concern him, either way. If Meredith attended to the early notices of his books, he must often have sighed, as one who watches for the morning. Even so late as 1880 the *Westminster Review,* traditionally favorable to his reputation, commented upon the recently published *Egoist* — now often considered his weightiest contribution to fiction — as follows:

> Mr. Meredith is, perhaps, our most artistic novelist, and, for that very reason, by no means popular with mere subscribers to Mudie's. His audience is few, but fit. . . . He is, in a word, what the world would vulgarly call too clever. . . . This is Mr. Meredith's great fault — he overdoes his cleverness. If he was more simple, he would be far more effective. *The Egoist* is full of poetry, subtle observation, and sparkling epigram.

This review, with its emphasis upon the literary artist, is typical, and, unless I am mistaken, is about the quintessence of bad criticism. For it has yet to be demonstrated that perfection of art has interfered with the success of any matter whatsoever, even among the subscribers to Mudie's. Those who value Meredith's work most wisely will not extol him for his artistry, but rather deplore his lack of it as one of the many obstacles that have stood in the way of his popularity. Furthermore, to say that he " overdoes his cleverness " is to suggest that he consciously strains for effect. If this critic had really been one of that fit audience, though few, he would rather have suggested that it was insuperably difficult for Meredith not to be clever, that it was almost impossible for him to be simple, that it was entirely regrettable that he did not receive a stiff English academic training. How might not the Oxford culture have disciplined his Celtic lawlessness and have subdued his turn for " natural magic " ! Welsh and Irish in ancestry, Meredith was educated at a Moravian school in Germany. In the plastic time of his youth, he, like Browning and Carlyle, was his own master of rhetoric. Like Carlyle, he wrote prose as if Dryden had never shown the superiority of Charles the Second's English to the flowered and conceited exuberance of the Elizabethans. Like Browning, he wrote verse as if Pope had not died to save us from the sins of the metaphysical school. If Donne, as honest Ben declared, for not keeping of accents deserved hanging, so occasionally did Mer-

edith; and so did Meredith frequently for wanton violations of English idiom and barbarous disregard of the decencies of English style. He lacked the continence of perfect art. He was not steadily master of the means of imparting his experience to the reader and producing the effects which he desired to produce.

He was not wanting in a perception of the supreme beauty of style which appears when a clear conception is perfectly transmitted. His critical sense was sound; he knew where to send other men for light. To a correspondent who had asked him to name the writers most characteristic of the genius of France he replied: "For human philosophy, Montaigne; for the comic appreciation of society, Molière; for the observation of life and condensed expression, La Bruyère; for a most delicate irony scarcely distinguishable from tenderness, Renan; for high pitch of impassioned sentiment, Racine. Add to these your innumerable writers of Mémoirs and Pensées, in which France has never had a rival." To another correspondent he wrote with notable disparagement of English models: "*Style is rarely achieved here.* Your literary hero, lecturing on Style, may have a different opinion. The prose in Shakespeare and Congreve is perfect. They have always the right accent on their terminations. Apart from drama, Swift is a great exemplar; Bolingbroke, and in his mild tea-table way, Addison, follow. Johnson and Macaulay wielded bludgeons; they had not the strength that can be supple. Gibbon could take a long stride with the leg of a dancing master; he could not take a short one." In his essay on the "Idea of Comedy" he showed the keenest appreciation of the styles of Menander and Terence, writing with rapture of their "Elysian speech, equable and ever gracious." But two years later, in the prelude of the *Egoist,* he was capable of such fantastic sentences as this:

Who, says the notable humorist, in allusion to this book (*Book of Earth*), who can studiously travel through sheets of leaves, now capable of a stretch from the Lizard to the last few pulmonary snips and shreds of leagues dancing on their toes for cold, explorers tell us, and catching breath by good luck, like dogs on a table, on the edge of the Pole?

Judged with reference to such standards as are offered by *Henry Esmond* or *The Return of the Native,* he wanted art no less as a story-teller than as a stylist. It is true that he undertook the novelist's most difficult task. In his work the narration of events is quite secondary to the disclosure of character. His representation of men and women was designed to reveal the secret springs of conduct in speech and art. Sometimes, like the messenger of the Senecan tragedy, he reports the great things that are going on behind the scenes when our English sense clamors for dramatic representation. Sometimes with a kind of choric fury he drowns the voices of the actors and assaults the ears of the audience with a prolonged and partly enigmatic commentary. Sometimes he translates the conversation of hero and heroine into a condensed telegraphic Meredithese. These methods of telling a story are inartistic because they do not effectively convey to the reader the mental and emotional experience which the author has enjoyed; because they defraud him in the critical moment of the legitimate and expected pleasure of hearing the *ipsissima verba* * and of seeing the decisive gesture with his own eyes. Defenders of Meredith will say that he was bent on our perceiving the finer meanings of act and speech, and that he could be sure of his purpose by no other methods. That is to confess that he lacked the skill of the supreme literary artist, that his intention was greater than his power, that his vehicle was inadequate to its burden. He had himself a subtle sense of the deeper implica-

* [The very words.]

tions of speech, but he did not possess sovereignly that instinct which finds a single word to tell all. When Romeo is banished from Verona, the nurse urges Juliet to marry Paris. Then follows this dialogue:

Jul. Speak'st thou from thy heart?
Nurse. And from my soul, too; else beshrew them both.
Jul. Amen!
Nurse. What?
Jul. Well, thou hast comforted me marvellous much.
Go in; and tell my lady I am gone,
Having displeas'd my father, to Laurence's cell
To make confession and to be absolv'd.

What more can one desire? Could forty pages of commentary add anything to that one incomparable Amen? That is what the literary artist does with conversation. Shakespeare's plays are sown with such volume-speaking words: in Meredith's novels I do not know where you will find anything approaching it. Too often in Meredith there is volubility where in Shakespeare silence is the orator.

If Meredith was not a supreme literary artist, is it possible that he was a first-rate literary genius; or are the two things inseparable? It would be gratifying to find some substantial ground for the apparently extravagant claims of his friends. One of them, Robert Louis Stevenson, has been charged with uncritically juxtaposing Meredith and Shakespeare in the enthusiasm of his admiration for *Rhoda Fleming*. Looking through Stevenson's letters, however, I have been pleased to observe that he says very little about Meredith as a literary artist. In Sidney Colvin's two-volume edition under the date of 1879, when *The Egoist* was published, there is a single reference to Meredith, as follows: " Chapters viii and ix of Meredith's story are very good, I think." That

is all — and he had met the author in 1878, and they had become warm friends. But three years after that not ecstatic comment, Stevenson, in a letter to W. E. Henley, lists among those worthy of being honored with a dedication, "George Meredith, the only man of genius of my acquaintance." "Talking of Meredith," he continues significantly, "I have just re-read for the third and fourth time *The Egoist*. When I shall have read it the sixth or seventh, I begin to see I shall know about it. . . . I had no idea of the matter — human, red matter — he has contrived to *plug and pack* (the italics are mine) into that strange, admirable book." Finally, with a passing glance at George Eliot, whom he could never mention with entire decorum, he concludes: "I see more and more that Meredith is built for immortality." A book so plugged and packed with matter that it took four to six readings to extract its meaning certainly did not represent Stevenson's ideal in art. The full explanation of his enthusiasm does not appear till 1884, again in a letter to Henley. This time it is as plain as could be desired: "My view of life is essentially the comic; and the romantically comic." Then after more comment on Meredith: "The comedy which keeps the beauty and touches the terrors of our life (laughter and tragedy-in-a-good-humor having kissed) that is the last word of moved representation; embracing the greatest number of elements of fate and character." Stevenson might fairly call the man a genius who had opened for him his literary gospel and had shown him a satisfactory point of view from which to represent the moving spectacle of life.

There are numerous indications, some of doubtful value, that the followers of Meredith are beginning to recognize him as a spiritual master rather than a literary model. The select literary clubs which in the old days used to study the riddle of the Sphinx in *Childe Roland*, have discovered that

Meredith's poems are less trite, equally difficult, and therefore probably equally profound. Some of the novels, too, have attracted those curious persons who find their chief pleasure in perusing what their friends declare impossible. Four or five books have been devoted to the exposition of Meredith's art and ideas, not all of which are harder to read than the works which they explain. But chiefly we must reckon in the decisive tribute of the younger generation of writers who by imitation and open avowal declare their deep indebtedness to him. "At the present moment," says Mrs. Craigie, "all the most worthy English novelists, with the exception of Thomas Hardy, are distinguished disciples of George Meredith." The heterogeneous character of the alleged Meredithians — Stevenson, Du Maurier, Henley, Sara Grand, Anthony Hope, Maurice Hewlett, W. J. Locke, George Bernard Shaw, G. K. Chesterton, and many others — is suggestive. It means that to young authors he has not been primarily a literary model; those who have caught most of his spirit have least imitated his structure and style. It means that if Meredith is "built for immortality" he will survive not merely as an epigrammatist, or as a subtle poet, or as a psychologizing novelist, but also as a man with a fund of energizing ideas, a constructive critic of life, if not an artist at any rate a genius, one of the spokesmen and master spirits of his time.

Herein certainly lies one of his indubitable claims to genius: that he studied and solved in some measure the basic problems of our contemporary literature half a century before it existed. Though his exposition was unequal to his insight, and his coevals missed many of his points, such of our authors as to-day face the future smiling have found him out. The basic problems of contemporary literature are, for the thoughtful and responsible writer, manifold in appearance but in essence single: How to present a view

of life both wise and brave, answering to experience as well as to desire, serviceable in art or in the daily walk. Single in essence, in appearance they are manifold: How to give pleasure without corrupting the heart, and how to give wisdom without chilling it. How to bring into play the great passions of men without unchaining the beast. How to believe in Darwin and the dignity of man. How to recognize the rôle of the nerves in human action without paralyzing the nerve of action. How to admit the weakness of man without dashing his heroism. How to see his acts and respect his intentions. How to renounce his superstitions and retain his faith. How to rebuke without despising him. How to reform society without rebelling against it. How to laugh at its follies without falling into contempt. How to believe that evil is fleeing forever before good, but will never be overtaken and slain. How to look back upon a thousand defeats, and yet cling to the fighting hope. If you will go through this list of questions you will not find one that Meredith does not answer or attempt to answer. Long before Stevenson began to preach his gospel of cheerfulness and valor to a dispirited and pusillanimous world Meredith had marked the texts for his homilies. Long before Mr. Shaw broke into his Mephistophelian laughter, and long before Mr. Chesterton had discovered his loyalty to the universe, when they — if one can conceive such a thing — were quietly sleeping in their cradles, George Meredith had already bottled their thunder.

Richard Feverel, published in 1859 with *The Virginians,* and *Adam Bede, The Tale of Two Cities,* and *The Origin of Species,* was a repudiation and a prophecy, but was recognized as neither. The *Westminster Review,* though perceiving in it observation, humor, passion, and tenderness, declared that the " book offers no solution of any of the difficulties it lays open to us; the nineteenth century struggles

through it with but faint glimpses of its goal." With interspersed hints in subsequent novels, with prefaces, and with poems Meredith sought to amend the reviewer's error, but not till 1877, when, Aristotle to his own dramatic cycle, he published the *Idea of Comedy,* did he finally make clear his message. From that time it began slowly to be evident that he had made his novels, after all, but the vehicles of an impassioned conviction. He, like so many earnest men of his troubled century, had sought a way of salvation from skepticism, melancholy, ennui, and despair; and he found a way. Other men had other remedies. For Newman the one thing needful was to submit to authority and enter the Roman fold. Carlyle thought the best that could be done for a man was to find him a master and set him to work. For Mill the key to happiness was free logical discussion in the interests of humanity. For the men of science it was the following of truth wherever it leads. Arnold held that none of these things was of importance in comparison with the ability to recognize " the grand style," whenever it appeared. To those who have read intelligently Meredith's *Idea of Comedy,* I do not think it will seem an anticlimax to say that he believed the one thing needful, synthesis of all needs, was to instruct men in the proper uses of the comic spirit, that they might laugh and be laughed at unto their soul's salvation. For to him the comic spirit is a fine celestial sunlight in the mind, answering to the theological Grace of God in the heart, which preserves those into whom it passes from every evil thing. It is not hostile to prayer nor to labor nor to logic nor to truth nor to grandeur, but is very friendly to them all. It keeps prayer sweet, labor cheerful, logic sane, truth serviceable, and grandeur human. But over every form of animalism, egotism, sentimentalism, cowardice, and unreason, " it will look humanely malign, and cast an oblique light on them, followed by showers of silvery

laughter." For, to quote from the ode to the same beneficent spirit, it is the

> Sword of Common Sense!
> Our surest gift: the sacred chain
> Of man to man.

Once grasp this Meredithian idea of comedy and suddenly you find yourself at the center of a coherent critical system. You open the works anywhere — barring perhaps some of the more cryptic poems — and you find yourself at home in an ordered well-lighted world. You perceive why the younger generation is turning toward him, and you see the relation in which he stood to most of his fellows in fiction fifty years ago. The definitions by which in the essay the comic spirit is isolated furnish a formidable critical arsenal. "The sense of the Comic is much blunted by habits of punning and of using humoristic phrase; the trick of employing Johnsonian polysyllables to treat of the infinitely little" — that by no means disposes of Dickens but it casts an "oblique light" upon him. Much more penetrating is this: "Comedy justly treated . . . throws no infamous reflection upon life." How that judges the sneering cynicism of all too frequent passages in the novels of Thackeray like the following:

> Oh, Mr. Pendennis! (although this remark does not apply to such a smart fellow as you) if Nature had not made provision for each sex in the credulity of the other, which sees good qualities where none exist, good looks in donkey's ears, wit in their numskulls, and music in their bray, there would not have been near so much marrying and giving in marriage as now obtains, and is necessary for the due propagation of the noble race to which we belong.

That principle is far reaching; it condemns in a single breath the whole miasmic marsh-land of naturalism. "It

is unwholesome for men and women to see themselves as they are, if they are no better than they should be" — there is the ethical, or, if one prefers, the sanitary, plank in the platform of the new idealism. "The same as of an immoral may be said of realistic exhibitions of a vulgar society" — there is the repudiation of wide wastes of the dry-as-dust realistic fiction, a much-needed denial of the democratic notion that all subjects are fit for art. In some of the poems the Comic Spirit becomes almost truculent in its glee. It is clearly so in pitching upon any theatrical rebel against society; for example, in the verses called "Manfred":

> Projected from the bilious Childe,
> This clatterjaw his foot could set
> On Alps, without a breast beguiled
> To glow in shedding rascal sweat.
> Somewhere about his grinder teeth,
> He mouthed of thoughts that grilled beneath,
> And summoned Nature to her feud,
> With bile and buskin Attitude.

Meredith arrived a little too late to play Childe Harold or Don Juan; but if he had not been protected by his guardian spirit, he might easily have taken a part in that more plaintive and dismal literature of despair represented by numerous poems of Matthew Arnold. In the crushed and crabbed verse of Meredith's jibe at Arnold's *Empedocles,* I confess to finding something very tonic, something that Arnold as critic would have himself called tonic:

> He leaped. With none to hinder,
> Of Aetna's fiery scoriæ
> In the next vomit-shower, made he
> A more peculiar cinder.

> And this great Doctor, can it be,
> He left no saner recipe
> For men at issue with despair?
> Admiring, even his poet owns,
> While noting his fine lyric tones,
> The last of him was heels in air!
> . . . .
> Each life its critic deed reveals:
> And him reads reason at his heels,
> If heels in air the last of him.

But what has comedy to do with tragedy, and how do they become tragi-comedy? Well, in the luminous intoxication of the morning following the symposium, Socrates forced Agathon and Aristophanes, who alone had stayed it out with him till cockcrow, to confess not only that tragedy and comedy may be composed by the same person, but also that "the foundations of the tragic and comic arts were essentially the same." Aristodemus, who reported the conclusion of the dispute, was unfortunately asleep during the discussion. With this, for that reason, unexplained opinion of Socrates, Meredith was obviously in accord. To his view, life is neither wholly comedy nor wholly tragedy, but both at once. In order to distinguish either element one must be able to distinguish both; the comic spirit, one may almost say, is that which perceives the tragic fault. In order to represent life bravely and wisely, one must see it steadily, and see it whole. Such sight is given only to deep and grave heads. Those endowed with this vision discern that the great girders which bear up the world of man are the discipline of the passions by the mind, loyalty to reason, and faith in civilization. Whatever forces attempt to weaken these girders — the cynicism of Don Juan, the despair of Empedocles — the Comic Spirit holds them, to adopt the Caesarian euphemism, *in numero hostium* — puts them to

the sword of common sense. The discernment that these great girders are essential to civilization, and the loyalty which in grave men springs with the discernment, underlie every true comedy and every true tragedy. But the struggle which most men undergo in disciplining their passions, learning to walk in the light of reason, and preserving their faith in civilization, is a strange series of ups and downs. Comedy attends to their foolish falls; tragedy to their painful failures; to represent the whole course of the struggle is to write tragi-comedy.

Tragi-comedy as the position of equipoise in life and art — that, in Meredith's time, was a notable discovery. When we attempt to measure his achievement we should not lose sight of the originality, the scope, and the difficulty of his design. He planned to produce thoughtful laughter, an aim which demanded that the characters in his novels, as well as in his audience, should possess some of the culture of the drawing-room. But he planned at the same time to move the great passions which are generally attenuated under intensive cultivation. Since the Restoration they had almost disappeared from the fiction of high life. Wordsworth had been obliged to seek out the great universal impulses in the cottages of Cumberland peasants. The Brontës studied them in mad country squires. George Eliot found them among the yeomen of Warwickshire. Even Thomas Hardy has had to resort to shepherds and dairy-maids — so fugitive is our sense of solemn splendor from the roar of cities and civilized men. But what pitiful antagonists of destiny these rural people of Mr. Hardy make. The intelligence of mortals is wholly inactive in the combat. In condemning the ways of God to man this grim artist seems obsessed by the idea that all nature is conspiring to bring a helpless humanity to degradation and shame. That is hardly to see life whole. Meredith sought his splendor in another place. His problem

was how to make tragedy and comedy meet together in the drawing-room. Comedy was there to stay; but as for tragedy, Thackeray, for example, avoided it. Dickens and his public really preferred melodrama and bloody murder.

To his contemporaries and predecessors Meredith appears on the whole to have owed relatively little, though his obligations were probably larger than has generally been acknowledged. What makes him appear comparatively isolated in his time is not his exemption from contemporary forces, but his comprehensive inclusion of them within his own complex mind and temperament. His culture is wide and deep. His fiction gathers its virtues from poetry, history, science, and philosophy. His purposefulness is fortified by an intimate and almost lifelong friendship with that fine austere Liberal, John Morley, and with that drily witty master of common sense, Leslie Stephen, and with that high-aspiring revered sage, Thomas Carlyle. In *Farina, The Shaving of Shagpat, The Ordeal of Richard Feverel, Evan Harrington,* and *The Egoist* one may possibly detect the influence of the comic spirit of Meredith's first father-in-law, Thomas Love Peacock, whose laughter leaped and flashed upon the humbugs and intellectual follies of his day with much of the Meredithian lambency and gusto. On his graver side he shows a certain affiliation with George Eliot; but so far as the chronological indications go, he is as likely to have influenced her as she to have influenced him. The moral high seriousness and the love of Nature, so conspicuously exhibited by both, may perhaps be ascribed in part to their common inheritance from Wordsworth. The significant chapter in the *Ordeal of Richard Feverel* entitled "Nature speaks" is strikingly parallel not merely in its spirit but also in its incidents to Wordsworth's *Peter Bell* — a poem written to illustrate the healing and redemptive impulses from a "vernal wood."

But no writer between Meredith and Shakespeare has

Meredith's power of marrying tragedy and comedy, poetry and laughter. He is the single exception to the rule that no disciple can stand up under the overwhelming influence of the great Elizabethan. Shakespeare was his master. Shakespeare determined his point of view and the large feature of his artistic representation. From him he learned to choose out for the favorite theater of his action a country-house, where, as in a court, were assembled enough actors of civilized life to be visible against the scenery. From him he learned to let poor clowns play humble parts, and if any one had to be sent out on a barren heath, to send a king who even in madness was a match for the storm. From him he learned to line the back and sides of his stage with the gray and middle ages of wisdom, pedantry, sanctity, craft, and cynicism; and then to release in the foreground young Romeo and Juliet, or Perdita and Florizel, or Ferdinand and Miranda to discover the brave new world under the stinging rain of comment from prudent or disillusioned antiquity; and then at last, whether to youth and beauty the vista of days opened smiling, or whether some dire mischance closed their fond eyes forever, to intimate that to youth belong the untrodden ways.

The " criticism of life " underlying Meredith's representations of it is in its general outlines Shakespearian, and it is Shakespearian in the sweetness and the nobility of its temper. Meredith, like his master, accepts the universe with a smile; but like his master, he almost immediately proceeds to distinguish within the human microcosm three distinct levels of being: blood, brain, and spirit. He is, to be sure, so far a man of his own time that he conceives the physical, the intellectual, and the spiritual as successive stages in the grand evolutionary process. He looks to no Hebrew chronicler to explain how in the beginning light was divided from darkness and man from the beasts of the field.

He ascribes these epoch-making distinctions to the inscrutable workings of Life and our mother Earth — deities always named by him with reverence; but, unlike the naturalistic novelists of his day, he regards these distinctions as real, substantial, and established. He does not conceive of man as mere flesh or mere mind or mere spirit but as, at his healthiest and completest, a fine concord and harmony of the three. All this the reader may find in the following lines from *The Woods of Westermain.*

> Each of each in sequent birth,
> Blood and brain and spirit, three
> (Say the deepest gnomes of Earth),
> Join for true felicity.
> Are they parted, then expect
> Someone sailing to be wrecked:
> Separate hunting are they sped,
> Scan the morsel coveted.
> Earth that Triad is: she hides
> Joy from him who that divides;
> Showers it when the three are one
> Glassing her in union.

For the novelists who represent man as essentially a depraved animal Meredith has little but loathing and contempt. After reading a naturalistic work by one of his French contemporaries he writes, in 1887: "O what a nocturient, cacaturient crew has issued of the lens of the Sun of the mind on the lower facts of life! — on sheer Realism, breeder at best of the dung-fly. Yet has that Realism been a corrective of the more corruptingly vaporous with its tickling hints at sensuality. It may serve ultimately in form of coprolite to fatten poor soil for better produce."

Yet Meredith declares repeatedly in his letters that "a frank acceptance of Reality is the firm basis of the Ideal." As a moralist he is anti-Puritan. He has no patience with

an ascetic mortification of the flesh. Like Browning's David, he rejoices in "our manhood's prime vigour"; he accepts with a relish the legitimate physical gratifications of life —

> And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with gold dust divine,
> And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher, the full draught of wine.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessop he writes: "Let men make good blood, I constantly cry. I hold that to be rightly materialistic — to understand and take nature as she is — is to get on the true divine highroad. That we should attain to a healthy humanity, is surely the most pleasing thing in God's sight." With allusion to Hawthorne, he says in 1865: "I strive by study of humanity to represent it: not its morbid action. I have a tendency to do that, which I repress: for, in delineating it, there is no gain. In all my, truly, very faulty works, there is this aim. Much of my strength lies in painting morbid emotion and exceptional positions; but my conscience will not let me so waste my time."

These convictions are illustrated in his novels by his representations of what we should call to-day the "eugenic" marriage, and by his unrivalled array of healthy "fair women and brave men." His heroines can walk, ride, row, and swim distances which to any one of Jane Austen's ladies would have been appalling — of which the mere prospect would probably have caused her to sink swooning into the arms of her escort. He recognizes and treats frankly enough the magnetic force of sexual attraction; but he recognizes it, by choice, in men and women who live above the level of sensuality, and in whom this mysterious force has been metamorphosed into a general energizer of the intelligence and spirit. In his exquisite poem, *Love in the Valley*, for example, the physical root of the emotion is adequately indicated, but what is offered for our delectation is its bursting

through the senses into fragrant and luxuriant blossom in the mind and the imagination. The speaker, like a right Shakesperian lover, is keenly alive to the sensuous charm of the beloved being, but his higher faculties exalt and transfigure the delight of the senses, and hold him rapt, reverent, and breathless with adoration. I quote a few stanzas which may be paralleled by his description of Lucy Desborough in *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* or by the description of Meredith's second wife in the Letters, ending thus: "When her hand rests in mine, the world seems to hold its breath, and the sun is moveless. I take hold of Eternity."—

Under yonder beech-tree single on the green-sward,
Couched with her arms behind her golden head,
Knees and tresses folded to slip and ripple idly,
Lies my young love sleeping in the shade.
Had I the heart to slide an arm beneath her,
Press her parting lips as her waist I gather slow,
Waking in amazement she could not but embrace me:
Then would she hold me and never let me go?

. . . . . .

Shy as the squirrel and wayward as the swallow,
Swift as the swallow along the river's light
Circleting the surface to meet his mirrored winglets,
Fleeter she seems in her stay than in her flight.
Shy as the squirrel that leaps among the pine-tops,
Wayward as the swallow overhead at set of sun,
She whom I love is hard to catch and conquer,
Hard, but O the glory of the winning were she won.

. . . . . .

When her mother tends her before the laughing mirror,
Tying up her laces, looping up her hair,
Often she thinks, were this wild thing wedded,
More love should I have, and much less care.

When her mother tends her before the lighted mirror,
Loosening her laces, combing down her curls,
Often she thinks, were this wild thing wedded,
I should miss but one for many boys and girls.

. . . . . .

When at dawn she sighs, and like an infant to the window
Turns grave eyes craving light, released from dreams,
Beautiful she looks, like a white water lily
Bursting out of bud in haven of the streams.
When from bed she rises clothed from neck to ankle
In her long nightgown sweet as boughs of May,
Beautiful she looks, like a tall garden lily
Pure from the night, and splendid for the day.

The peculiar specialty of the Meredithian heroine, however, is neither health nor beauty, but brains. In behalf of women George Meredith repudiates alike Alfred Austin's old Tory ideal — the soft shy mate that sits on the nest and never stirs; the Pre-Raphaelite ideal — all lips and neck and dreaming eyes; and Thomas Hardy's romantic ideal — the fair puppet of passionate impulse. His view of the subject resembles that of John Stuart Mill in his fervid treatise on *The Subjection of Women* — a plea for the emancipation of women in their own interest and in the interest of society at large. "I can foresee great and blessed changes for the race when they have achieved independence"; he writes in a letter of 1888, "for that must come of the exercise of their minds — the necessity for which is induced by their reliance on themselves for subsistence." To his sense, many of the Victorian representations of women in art and in literature reflect but the unsubdued Turkish instincts of the male. His conscience rebels against the imposition upon fair English girls of the ideals of the harem. His intelligence is irritated, as that of most men is from time to time, by the

difficulty of settling any question with a typical representative of " the sex " on rational grounds. The subtlest sonnet sequence in English, his *Modern Love*, is a series of cries of exasperation and pain at the baffling indirectness of the dealing of woman with man:

> Their sense is with their senses all mixed in,
> Destroyed by subtleties these women are!
> More brain, O Lord, more brain! or we shall mar
> Utterly this fair garden we might win.

Clara Middleton in *The Egoist*, Diana of the Crossways, and Aminta are among his notable essays toward the establishment of a new ideal of " femininity." With the young health of Nature in May and the beauty of the white birch tree they unite a keen critical faculty which is their mark of intellectual independence. Emotional enough, all of them, they are not in the long run at the mercy of their emotions. If they have been duped in their first adventure with society, they have the wit to extricate themselves from situations threatening disaster, and to reconstruct their lives in conformity with a rational ideal and, if necessary, like George Eliot in defiance of conventions — a readjustment, by the way, as remote from sensual philandering as the north pole is from the south pole. Of Diana, Meredith says proudly, " she has no puppet pliancy." Regarded as a character she has grievous faults. Regarded as a piece of characterization, she is not entirely plausible. But regarded as the imperfect human illustration of certain ideals, she is — in her valiancy and in her power of intellectual growth and spiritual rejuvenescence — one of the most interesting and inspiriting women in English fiction.

In order to " civilize " the women Meredith sees very clearly that it is necessary at the same time to civilize the men. Civilization implies for him the emancipation of

human conduct from non-rational controls. It means establishing in secure sovereignty within each individual man a benevolent and beneficent mind. He has no over-sanguine expectation of the completion of the evolutionary process. He sees the serenity and freedom of reason

> By more elusive savages assailed
> On each ascending stage.

He girds on the sword of the Comic Spirit and unleashes the hounds of laughter to hunt down the " savages " lurking and skulking in the breasts of those representatives of the race who are in outward appearance most remote from our ancestors of the cave. His game includes the philosopher who bids us trust our emotional instincts — " accept the *throb* for lord of us " ; or who bids us bow the knee to hoary and outworn conventions; or who lays us prostrate by mumbling " the crackskull name of Fate " ; or who sets up self as God. Meredith had drunk deep of the intellectual radicalism of Mill and Morley, and the spirit of it profoundly affects his representations of men in fiction. The qualities which, above everything else, he glorifies in his young men are intrepidity and will; the defects upon which his muse looks malignly are " the untrimmed lamp and the ungirt loin." The virtues which he admires in men of maturity are wisdom and generosity; the sins which he castigates are innumerable, but most conspicuous among them are sensuality, pride, obstinacy, and egotism. Sir Willoughby Patterne in *The Egoist* is his great and unrivalled masterpiece in the remorseless dissection of male egotism masking as sensibility and refinement. If the book were read, chewed, and " inwardly digested " by every young man contemplating courtship or marriage, we might reasonably look two or three generations hence for some wholesome clarifications and amendments in the spiritual relations of the sexes. Sir Willoughby Patterne

is his most elaborate and penetrating study of a single specimen of the lordly species, but his richest and most various exhibition of critical portraits of men is in *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, where the light of the Comic Spirit falls brilliantly upon the sentimentality and the tragic pride, obstinacy, and egotism of Sir Austin Feverel; the deliberate sensuality and the cynicism of Adrian Harley; the gluttony and hypochondria of Hippias Feverel; the undisciplined wrath of Farmer Blaize, the dull Philistinism of Thompson *père*, the follies of young Richard's passion and hot-headed generosity, the dull juvenile obscenity of Ripton Thompson; and upon sundry others. Every one of these men was vitally conceived. Each one of them has his winsome and lovable aspects. Meredith seems incapable of hating or despising utterly any one of his kind. But his warm human friendliness is edged, like a surgeon's knife, for discrimination. He cuts deep but the operation is therapeutic. "By my faith in the head," he cries, quaintly imaging his reliance upon the widening of intellectual light:

> I can hear a faint crow
> Of the cock of fresh mornings, far, far, yet distinct.

What does an evolutionist like Meredith mean when he distinguishes the spiritual from the intellectual world? He has himself some difficulty in telling us, but one gathers from his various utterances that to "live in the spirit" is to live steadily above the clamor of the flesh and the crying of self-interest to the will. Intercourse with men who dwell habitually at that level has, as most of us know, an ennobling influence akin to that of great works of art, love of country, and religion. Meredith had no respect for the orthodox theology of his time, but he called himself a "practical Christian," and, to my sense, he writes, in frequent passages of his

correspondence, like a man who has experienced what theologians call "the peace of God." In 1872 he writes to his son:

You know how Socrates loved Truth. Virtue and truth are one. Look for the truth in everything, and follow it, and you will then be living justly before God. Let nothing flout your sense of a Supreme Being, and be certain that your understanding wavers whenever you chance to doubt that he leads to good. We grow to good as the plant grows to light. The school has only to look through history for a scientific assurance of it. And do not lose the habit of praying to the unseen Divinity. Prayer for worldly goods is worse than fruitless, but *prayer for strength of soul is that passion of the soul which catches the gift it seeks.*

In "the first ten minutes of 1878" he sends to John Morley a new year's greeting, pulsing still with the mystical exultation which the writer felt when he hailed the new year under the midnight skies to the sound of the new year's bells:

To come from a gaze at the stars — Orion and shaking Sirius below him — is to catch a glance at the inscrutable face of him that hurries us on, as on a wheel, from dust to dust — I thought of you and how it might be with you this year: hoped for good: saw beyond good and evil to great stillness, another form of moving for you and me. It seems to me that Spirit is, — how, where, and by what means involving us, none can say. But in this life there is no life save in spirit. The rest of life, and we may know it in love, — is an aching and a rotting.

When in 1885 Meredith's wife lay dying, he wrote to John Morley: "Happily for me, I have learnt to live much in the spirit and see brightness on the other side of life, otherwise this running of my poor doe with the inextricable arrow in her flanks, would pull me down too. As it is, I sink at times. I need all my strength to stand the harsh facts of existence. I wish it were I to be the traveller instead."

After her death: " While she lingered I could not hope for it to last, and now I could crave any of the latest signs of her breathing — a weakness of my flesh. When the mind shall be steadier, I shall have her calmly present — past all tears." Two days later: " She was the best of wives, truest among human creatures . . . I believe in Spirit, and I have her with me here, though at present I cannot get to calm of thought, all the scenes of her long endurance, and the days of peace before it rise up."

I have been attempting to show why Meredith's " criticism of life " impresses one, as, on the whole, unusually adequate for a writer of our bewildered age. Perhaps the rarest note in the literature of our time is nobility of feeling. Meredith strikes that note on whatever level he touches the strings of life. Like his master Shakespeare, speaking nobly of the body, nobly of the mind, and nobly of the spirit, he sounds the chord of full harmony for which our hearts are eager. " Between realism and idealism," he declares, " there is no natural conflict. This completes that." Though his craftsmanship and power of representation were inferior to his conceptive and critical faculties, he produced a body of work which richly remunerates the explorer. Some of his contemporaries possessed separately in a higher degree the intellectual or the emotional powers with which he was gifted; but no one of them fused within himself so many and so diverse powers. He woke early to the necessity and the possibility of a new synthesis. His first novel, produced far back in the middle of the nineteenth century, seems incredibly fresh to-day, and would seem incredibly contemporaneous if our living writers had taught us to expect from them anything so sound and sweet. To an American critic he wrote in 1887: " I think that all right use of life, is to pave ways for the firmer footing of those who succeed us; as to my works, I know them faulty, think them

of worth only when they point and aid to that end." In close touch with distinguished leaders of Liberal thought, he heartily partook in their sense of high responsibility to society and in their resolution to make war without truce upon the confederated lusts and egotisms of unredeemed animal man. His sonnet to " J. M." is almost Miltonic in its note of valorous consecration:

> Our faith is ours and comes not on a tide:
> And whether Earth's great offspring, by decree,
> Must rot if they abjure rapacity,
> Not argument but effort shall decide.
> They number many heads in that hard flock:
> Trim swordsmen they push forth; yet try thy steel.
> Thou, fighting for poor human kind, wilt feel
> The strength of Roland in thy wrist to hew
> A chasm sheer into the barrier rock,
> And bring the army of the faithful through.

Few, indeed, are the writers of fiction who have striven so steadily to seize and conserve for posterity the sound ideas afloat in their time. In these four lines from *A Reading of Earth* we touch upon the controlling principle of all Meredith's work:

> Thou under stress of the strife,
> Shalt hear for sustainment supreme,
> The cry of the conscience of life:
> *Keep the young generations in hail,*
> *And bequeath them no tumbled house.*

THE GAME

SIMEON STRUNSKY

Mr. Simeon Strunsky, at one time editor-in-chief of the New York *Evening Post* and now one of the editors of *The New York Times*, has found the opportunity in his active journalistic career to produce several volumes of leisurely essays. Mr. Strunsky contemplates the American scene from the point of view of an unalarmed, even indulgent, conservative. The extravagancies of "modern" manners and "modern" ideas move him neither to sorrow nor to anger. He smiles wisely at each passing folly and waits for the next one to lift up its head. He remains always witty and observant, genial and good humored, a soothing counter-irritant to whatever is smart and noisy and faddish in current writing and thinking. (*The Game* appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1914. It was reprinted in *Belshazzar Court*, 1914.)

THE GAME

I

OFTEN I think how monotonous life must be to Jerome D. Travers or Francis Ouimet, — compared, that is, with what life can offer to a player of my quality. When Travers drives off, it is a question whether the ball will go 245 yards or 260 yards; and a difference of fifteen yards is obviously nothing to thrill over. Whereas, when I send the ball from the tee the possible range of variation is always 100 yards, running from 155 down to 55; provided, that is, that the ball starts at all. To me there is always a freshness of surprise in having the club meet the ball, which Travers, I dare say, has not experienced in the last dozen years.

With him, of course, it is not sport, but mathematics. A wooden club will give one result, an iron another. The sensation of getting greater distance with a putting iron than with a brassie is something Ouimet can hardly look forward to. Always mathematics, with this kind of swing laying the ball fifteen feet on the farther side of the hole, and that kind of chop laying it ten feet on the nearer side. I have frequently thought that playing off the finals for the golf championship is a waste of time. All that is necessary is to call in Professor Münsterberg and have him test Travers's blood-pressure and reaction index on the morning of the game, and then take " Chick " Evans's blood-pressure and reaction index. The referee would then award the game to Travers or to Evans by 2 up and 1 to play, or whatever score Professor Münsterberg's figures would indicate.

The true zest of play is for the duffer. When he swings club or racket he can never tell what miracles of accomplishment or negation it will perform. That is not an inanimate instrument he holds in his hands, but a living companion, a totem comrade whom he is impelled to propitiate, as Hiawatha crooned to his arrow before letting it fly from the string. And that is why duffers are peculiarly qualified to write about games, or for that matter, about everything, — literature, music, or art, — as they have always done. To be sufficiently inexpert in anything is to be filled with corresponding awe at the hidden soul in that thing. To be sufficiently removed from perfection is to worship it. Poets, for example, are preëminently the interpreters of life because they make such an awful mess of the practice of living. And for the same reason poets always retain the zest of life — because the poet never knows whether his next shot will land him on the green or in the sandpit, in Heaven or in the gutter. The reader will now be aware that in describing my status as a golfer I am not making a suicidal confession. On the contrary, I am presenting my credentials.

II

A great many people have been searching during ever so many years for the religion of democracy. I believe I have found it. That is, not a religion, if by it you mean a system completely equipped with creed, formularies, organization, home and foreign missions, schisms, an empty-church problem, an underpaid-minister's problem, a Socialist and I. W. W. problem, and the like; although, if I had the time to pursue my researches, I might find a parallel to many of these things. What I have in mind is a great democratic rite, a ceremonial which is solemnized on six days in the week during six months in the year by large masses of men with

such unfailing regularity and such unquestioning good faith that I cannot help thinking of it as essentially a religious performance.

It is a simple ceremonial, but impressive, like all manifestations of the soul of a multitude. I need only close my eyes to call up the picture vividly: It is a day of brilliant sunshine and a great crowd of men is seated in the open air, a crowd made up of all conditions, ages, races, temperaments, and states of mind. The crowd has sat there an hour or more, while the afternoon sun has slanted deeper into the west and the shadows have crept across greensward and hard-baked clay to the eastern horizon. Then, almost with a single motion, — the time may be somewhere between four-thirty and five o'clock, — this multitude of divers minds and tempers rises to its feet and stands silent, while one might count twenty perhaps. Nothing is said; no high priest intones prayer for this vast congregation; nevertheless the impulse of ten thousand hearts is obviously focused into a single desire. When you have counted twenty the crowd sinks back to the benches. A half minute at most and the rite is over.

I am speaking, of course, of the second half of the seventh inning, when the home team comes to bat. The precise nature of this religious half minute depends on the score. If the home team holds a safe lead of three or four runs; if the home pitcher continues to show everything, and the infield gives no sign of cracking, and the outfield isn't bothered by the sun, then I always imagine a fervent *Te Deum* arising from that inarticulate multitude, and the peace of a great contentment falling over men's spirits as they settle back in their seats. If the game is in the balance you must imagine the concentration of ten thousand wills on the spirit of the nine athletes in the field, ten thousand wills telepathically pouring their energies into the powerful arm of the man

in the box, into the quick eye of the man on first base, and the sense of justice of the umpire.

But if the outlook for victory is gloomy, the rite does not end with the silent prayer I have described. As the crowd subsides to the benches there arises a chant which I presume harks back to the primitive litanies of the Congo forests. Voices intone unkind words addressed to the players on the other team. Ten thousand voices chanting in unison for victory, twenty thousand feet stamping confusion to the opposing pitcher — if this is not worship of the most fundamental sort, because of the most primitive sort, then what is religion?

Consider the mere number of participants in this national rite of the seventh inning. I have said a multitude of ten thousand. But if the day be Saturday and the place of worship one of the big cities of either of the major leagues, the crowd may easily be twice as large. And all over the country at almost the same moment, exultant or hopeful or despairing multitudes are rising to their feet. Multiply this number of worshipers by six days — or by seven days if you are west of the Alleghenies, where Sunday baseball has somehow been reconciled with a still vigorous Puritanism — and it is apparent that a continuous wave of spiritual ardor sweeps over this continent between three-thirty and six P.M. from the middle of April to the middle of October. We can only guess at the total number of worshipers. The three major leagues will account for five millions. Add the minor leagues and the state leagues and the interurban contests — and the total of seventh-inning communicants grows overwhelming. Take the twenty-five million males of voting age in this country, assume one visit per head to a baseball park in the season, and the result is dazzling.

It is easier to estimate the number of worshipers than the intensity of the mood. I have no gauge for measuring the

spiritual fervor which exhales on the baseball stadiums of the country from mid-April to mid-October, growing in ardor with the procession of the months, until it attains a climax of orgiastic frenzy in the World's Series. Foreigners are in the habit of calling this an unspiritual nation. But what nation so frequently tastes — or for that matter has ever tasted — the emotional experience of the score tied in the ninth inning with the bases full? Foreigners call us an unspiritual people because they do not know the meaning of a double-header late in September — a double-header with two seventh innings.

I began by renouncing any claim to the discovery of a complete religion of democracy. But the temptation to point out parallels is irresistible. If Dr. Frazer had not finished with his *Golden Bough,* — or if he is thinking of a supplementary volume, — I can see how easily the raw material of the sporting columns would shape itself to religious forces and systems in his hands. If religious ceremonial has its origin in the play instinct of man, why go back to remote origins like the Australian corroboree and neglect Ty Cobb stealing second? If religion has its origin in primitive man's worship of the eternal rebirth of earth's fructifying powers with the advent of spring, how can we neglect the vivid stirring in the hearts of millions that marks the departure of the teams for spring training in Texas?

If I were a trained professional sociologist instead of a mere spectator at the Polo Grounds, it seems to me that I should have little trouble in tracing the history of the game several thousand years back of its commonly accepted origin somewhere about 1830. I could easily trace back the catcher's mask to the mask worn by the medicine-man among the Swahili of the West Coast. The three bases and home-plate would easily be the points of the compass, going straight back to the sun myth. Murray pulling down a fly in left

field would hark back straight to Zoroaster and the sun-worshipers. Millions of primitive hunters must have anointed, and prayed to, their weapons before Jeff Tesreau addressed his invocation to the spit-ball; and when Mathewson winds himself up for delivering the ball, he is not far removed from the sacred warrior dancer of Polynesia. If only I were a sociologist!

An ideal faith, this religion of baseball, the more you examine it. See, for instance, how it satisfies the prime requirement of a true faith that it shall ever be present in the hearts of the faithful; practiced not once a week on Sunday, but six times a week — and in the West seven times a week; professed not only in the appointed place of worship, but in the Subway before the game, and in the Subway after the game, and in the offices and shops and factories on rainy days. If a true religion is that for which a man will give up wife and children and forget the call of meat and drink, what shall we say of baseball? If a true religion is not dependent on aesthetic trappings, but voices itself under the open sky and among the furniture of common life, this is again the true religion. The stadium lies open to the sun, the rain, and the wind. The mystic sense is not stimulated by Gothic roof-traceries and the dimmed light of stained-glass windows. The congregation rises from wooden benches on a concrete flooring; it stands in the full light of a summer afternoon and lets its eyes rest on walls of billboards reminiscent of familiar things, — linen collars, table-waters, tobacco, safety-razors. Surely we have here a clear, dry, real religion of the kind that Bernard Shaw would approve.

I have said quite enough on this point. Otherwise I should take time to show how this national faith has created its own architecture, as all great religions have done. Our national contribution to the building arts has so far been confined to two forms — the skyscraper and the baseball sta-

dium, corresponding precisely to the two great religions of business and of play. I know that the Greeks and Romans had amphitheaters, and that the word stadium is not of native origin. But between the Coliseum and the baseball park there is all the difference that lies between imperialism and democracy. The ancient amphitheaters were built as much for monuments as for playgrounds. Consequently they were impressed with an æsthetic character which is totally repugnant to our idea of a baseball park.

There is no spiritual resemblance between Vespasian's amphitheater with its stone and marble, its galleries and imperial tribunes, its purple canvases stretched out against the sun — and our own Polo Grounds. Iron girders, green wooden benches, and a back fence frescoed with safety-razors and ready-made clothing — what more would a modern man have? The ancient amphitheaters were built for slaves who had to be flattered and amused by pretty things. The baseball park is for freemen who pay for their pleasures and can afford the ugliest that money can buy.

III

The art of keeping my eye on the ball is something I no longer have hope of mastering. If I fail to watch the ball it is because I am continually watching faces about me. The same habit pursues me on the street and in all public places — usually with unpleasant consequences, though now and then I have the reward of catching the reflection of a great event or a tense moment in the face of the man next to me. Then, indeed, I am repaid; but it is a procedure fatal to the scientific pursuit of baseball. While I am hunting in the face of the man next to me for the reflection of Doyle's stinging single between first and second base, I hear a roar and turn to find that something dramatic has happened at

third, and a stout young man in a green hat behind me says that the runner was out by a yard and should be benched for trying to spike the man on the bag.

The eagle vision of the stout young man behind me always fills me with amazement and envy. I concede his superior knowledge of the game. He knows every man on the field by his walk. He recalls under what circumstances the identical play was pulled off three years ago in Philadelphia. He knows beforehand just what moment Mr. McGraw will take his left fielder out of the game and send in a "pinch hitter." Long years of steady application will no doubt supply this kind of post-graduate expertship. But when it is a question not of theory but of a simple, concrete play which I did happen to be watching carefully, how is it that the man behind me can see that the runner was out by a yard and had nearly spiked the man on the bag, whereas all I can see is a tangle of legs and arms and a cloud of dust? My eyesight is normal; how does my neighbor manage to see all that he does as quickly as he does?

The answer is that he does not see. When he declares that the runner was out by a yard, and I turn around and regard him with envy, it is a comfort to have the umpire decide that the runner was safe after all. It is a comfort to hear the man behind me say that the ball cut the plate squarely, and to have the umpire call it a ball. It shakes my faith somewhat in human nature, but it strengthens my self-confidence. Yet it fails to shake the self-confidence of the man behind me. When I turn about to see his crest-fallen face, I find him chewing peanut-brittle in a state of supreme calm, and as I stare at him, fascinated by such peace of mind in the face of discomfiture, I hear a yell and turn to find the third baseman and all the outfield congregated near the left bleachers. I have made a psychological observation, but have missed the beginning of a double play.

My chagrin is temporary. As the game goes on my self-confidence grows enormously. I am awakening to the fact that the man behind me knows as little about the game as I do. When the pitcher of the visiting team delivered the first ball of the first inning, the man behind me remarked that the pitcher didn't have anything. My neighbor could tell by the pitcher's arm action that he was stale, and he recalled that the pitcher in question never did last more than half a game. This declaration of absolute belief did not stand in the way of a contradictory remark, made some time in the fifth inning, with our team held so far to two scratch hits. The stout young man behind me then said that the visiting pitcher was a wonder, that he had everything, that he would keep on fanning them till the cows came home, and that he was, in fact, the best southpaw in both leagues, having once struck out eight men in an eleven-inning game at Boston.

When a man gives vent to such obviously irreconcilable statements in less than five innings, it is inevitable that I should turn in my seat to get a square look at him. But I still find him calm and eating peanut-brittle; and as I stare at him and try to classify him, the man at the bat does something which brings half the crowd to its feet. By dint of much inquiry I discover that he has rolled a slow grounder to third and has made his base on it. Decidedly, psychology and baseball will not mix.

I suppose the stout young man behind me is a Fan, — provided there is really such a type. My own belief is that the Fan, as the baseball writers and cartoonists have depicted him, is a very rare thing. To the extent that he does exist he is the creation, not of the baseball diamond, but of the sporting writer and the comic artist. The Fan models himself consciously upon the type set before him in his favorite newspaper. It is once more a case of nature imitating art.

If Mr. Gibson, many years ago, had not drawn a picture of fat men in shirt-sleeves, perspiring freely and waving straw hats, the newspaper artist would not have imitated Mr. Gibson, and the baseball audience would not have imitated the newspapers. It is true that I have seen baseball crowds in frenzy; but these have been isolated moments of high tension when all of us have been brought to our feet with loud explosions of joy or agony. But the perspiring, ululant Fan in shirt-sleeves, ceaselessly waving his straw hat, uttering imprecations on the enemy, his enthusiasm obviously aroused by stimulants preceding his arrival at the baseball park, is far from being representative of the baseball crowd.

The spirit of the audience is best expressed in quite a different sort of person. He is always to be seen at the Polo Grounds, and when I think of baseball audiences it is he who rises before me, to the exclusion of his fat, perspiring brother with the straw hat. He is young, tall, slender, wears blue serge, and even on very cool days in the early spring he goes without an overcoat. He sits out the game with folded arms, very erect, thin-lipped, and with the break of a smile around the eyes. He is usually alone, and has little to say. He is not a snob; he will respond to his neighbor's comments in moments of exceptional emotional stress, but he does not wear his heart on his sleeve.

I imagine him sitting, in very much the same attitude, in college lecture-rooms, or taking instructions from the head of the office. Complete absorption under complete control — he fascinates me. While the stout young man behind me chatters on for his own gratification, forgetting one moment what he said the moment before, — an empty-headed young man with a tendency to profanity as the game goes on, — this other trim young figure in blue serge, with folded arms, sits immobile, watching, watching with a calm that must come out of real knowledge and experience, enjoying the thing im-

mensely, but giving no other sign than a sharper glint of the eye, a slight opening of the lips. In a moment of crisis, being only human, he rises with the rest of us, but deliberately, to follow the course of a high fly down the foul line far toward the bleachers. When the ball is caught he smiles and sits down and folds his arms. I envy him his capacity for drinking in enjoyment without display. This is the kind of Fan I should like to be.

IV

Does my thin-lipped friend in blue serge read the sporting page? I wonder. My own opinion is that he does not, except to glance through the box-score. It is for the other man, I imagine, the stout young man behind me who detected from the first ball thrown that the pitcher's arm was no good, and who later identified him as the best southpaw in the two leagues, that the sporting page with its humor, its philosophy, its art, and its poetry, is edited. The sporting page has long ceased to be a mere chronicle of sport and has become an encyclopedia, an anthology, a five-foot book-shelf, a little university in itself. The life mirrored in the pictures on the sporting page is not restricted to the prize-ring and the diamond, though the language of the prize-ring and the baseball field is its vernacular. The art of the sporting page has expanded beyond the narrow field of play to life itself, viewed as play.

The line of development is plain: from pictures of the Fan at the game the advance has been to pictures of the Fan at home, and so on to his wife and his young, and his *Weltanschauung,** until now the artist frequently casts aside all pretense of painting sport and draws pictures of humanity. The sporting cartoon has become a social chronicle.

* [Weltanschauung, outlook upon life.]

It is still found on the sporting page; partly, I suppose, because it originated there, partly because there is no other place in the paper where it can get so wide an audience. It entraps the man in the street who comes to read baseball and remains to study contemporary life — in violent, exaggerated form, but life none the less.

Even poetry. Sporting columns to-day run heavily to verse. Here, as well as in the pictures, there has been an evolution. From the mere rhymed chronicle of what happened to Christy Mathewson we have passed on to generalized reflections on life, expressed, of course, in terms of the game. Kipling has been the great model. His lilt and his "punch" are so admirably adapted to the theme and the audience. How many thousand parodies of "Danny Deever" and "The Vampire" have the sporting editors printed? I should hesitate to say. But Kipling and his younger imitators, with Henley's "Invictus" and "When I Was a King in Babylon," and the late Langdon Smith's "Evolution": "When I Was a Tadpole and You Were a Fish" — have become the patterns for a vast popular poetry which deals in the main with the red-blooded virtues, — grit, good-humor, and clean hitting, — but which drops with surprising frequency for an optimist race into the mood of Ecclesiastes: ——

> Demon of Slow and of Fast Ones,
> Monarch of Moisture and Smoke,
> Who made Wagner swing at Anyoldthing,
> And Baker look like a Joke.

And the writer goes on to remind the former king of the boxmen that sooner or later "Old Pop" Tempus asks for waivers on the best of us, and that Matty and Johnson must in due time make way for

Youngsters with pep from the Texas Steppe —
The Minors wait for us all.

Yes, you prince of batsmen, who amidst the bleachers' roar,

Strolled to the plate with your T. Cobb gait,
Hitting .364 —

alas, Old Pop Tempus has had his way with you, too: ——

Your Average now is Rancid
And the Pellet you used to maul
In Nineteen O Two has the Sign on you —
The Minors wait for us all.

Not that it matters, of course. The point is to keep on smiling and unafraid in Bushville as under the Main Tent, always doing one's best.

To swing at the Pill with right good will,
Hitting .164.

This is evidently something more than a sporting page. This is a cosmology.

V

Will those gentlemen who are in the habit of sneering at professional baseball kindly explain why it is precisely the professional game which has inspired the newspaper poets? Personally I like professional baseball, and for the very reasons why so many persons profess to dislike it. The game is played for money by men who play all the time. They would rather win than lose, but they are not devoured by the passion for victory. They will play with equal zest for Chicago to-day and for Boston to-morrow. But when you say all this you are really asserting what I have discovered to be a fact, — unless Mr. G. K. Chesterton has discovered it be-

fore me, — that only in professional sport does the true amateur spirit survive.

By the amateur spirit I mean the spirit which places the game above the victory; which takes joy, though it may be subdued joy, in the perfect coördination of mind and muscle and nerve; which plays to win because victory is the best available test of ability, but which is all the time aware that life has other interests than the standing of the clubs and the Golf Committee's official handicap. I contend that the man who plays to live is a better amateur than the man who lives to play. I am not thinking now of the actual amount of time one gives to the game, though even then it might be shown that Mr. Walter J. Travis devotes more hours to golf than Mr. Mathewson devotes to baseball. I am thinking rather of the adjustment of the game to the general scheme of life. It seems to be pretty well established that when your ordinary amateur takes up golf he deteriorates as a citizen, a husband and father; but I cannot imagine Mr. Walter Johnson neglecting his family in his passion for baseball. As between the two, where do you find the true amateur spirit?

I insist. Professional baseball lacks the picturesque and stimulating accessories of an intercollegiate game — the age-old rivalries, the mustering of the classes, the colors, the pretty women, the cheering carried on by young leaders to the verge of apoplexy. But after all, why this Saturnalia of pumped-up emotion over the winning of a game? The winning, it will be observed, and not the playing. Compared with such an exhibition of the lust for victory, a professional game, with its emphasis on the performance and not on the result, comes much nearer to the true heart of the play instinct. An old topic this, and a perilous one. Before I know it I shall be advocating the obsolete standards of English sport, which would naturally appeal to a duffer. Well, I

will take the consequences and boldly assert that there is such a thing as playing too keenly, — even when playing with perfect fairness, — such a thing as bucking the line too hard.

It is distortion of life values. After all, there are things worth breaking your heart to achieve and others that are not worth while. Francis Ouimet's victory over Vardon and Ray is something we are justly proud of; not so much as a display of golf, but as a display of our unrivaled capacity for rallying all the forces of one's being to the needs of the moment; for its display of that grit and nerve on which our civilization has been built so largely. Only observe, Ouimet's victory was magnificent, but it was not play. It was fought in the fierce spirit of the struggle for existence which it is the purpose of play to make us forget. It was Homeric, but who wants baseball or tennis or golf to be Homeric? Herbert Spencer was not merely petulant when he said that to play billiards perfectly argued a misspent life. He stated a profound truth. To play as Ouimet did against Vardon and Ray argues a distortion of the values of life. What shall it profit us if we win games and lose our sense of the proportion of things? It is immoral.

I think Maurice McLoughlin's hurricane service is immoral. I confess that when McLoughlin soars up from the base line like a combination Mercury and Thor, and pours the entire strength of his lithe, magnificent body through the racket into the ball, it is as beautiful a sight as any of the Greek sculptors have left us. But I cannot share the crowd's delight when McLoughlin's opponent stands helpless before that hurtling, twisting missile of fate. What satisfaction is there in developing a tennis service which nobody can return? The natural advantage which the rules of the game confer on the server ceases to be an advantage and becomes merely a triumph of machinery, even if it is human

machinery. A game of tennis which is won on aces is opposed to the very spirit of play. As a matter of fact, the crowd admits this when it applauds a sharp rally over the net, for then it is rejoicing in play, whereas applause for an ace is simply joy in winning. I repeat: McLoughlin making one of his magnificent kills on the return is play; McLoughlin shooting his unreturnable service from the back line is merely a scientific engineer — and nothing is more immoral than scientific management, especially when applied to anything really worth while in life. Incidentally, a change in the rules of tennis seems unavoidable. The ball, instead of being handed over to McLoughlin for sure destruction, will have to be thrown into the court by the umpire, as in polo.

VI

You will now see why I am so much drawn to the slender young man in blue serge who sits with folded arms and only smiles when Mr. Doyle is caught napping on first. It is because I am convinced that he sees the game as it ought to be seen, — with an intense sympathy and understanding, but, after all, with a sense of humor which recognizes that a great world lies outside the Polo Grounds. You would not think that such a world existed from the way in which the stout young man behind me has been carrying on. It will be recalled that he began by instantly discovering that the visiting pitcher's arm was no good. This discovery he had modified by the end of the fourth inning to the extent that the visiting pitcher now had everything. At the beginning of the ninth inning this revised opinion still held good. The score was 2 to 0 against the home team, and the stout young man got up in disgust, remarking that he had no use for a bunch of cripples who presumed to go up against a real team.

But he did not go home. He hovered in the aisle, and

when the home team, in the second half of the ninth, bunched four hits and won the game, the stout young man hurled himself down the aisle and out upon the field, shrieking madly. But the thin young man in blue serge got to his feet, smiled, made some observation to his neighbor in an undertone, which I failed to catch, and walked away.

BOOK REVIEWING

ROBERT LYND

Book reviewing generally is either treated as a craft, perhaps the humblest one associated with the production of books, or it is confused with criticism. Mr. Lynd recognizes it as an independent *genre* and undertakes to discriminate its function. His essay is the fullest and most thoughtful statement that has yet been made of the aims, the qualities, and the methods of ideal book-reviewing. Mr. Lynd is himself a conspicuous figure among English reviewers and essayists. *The Art of Letters* (1920) from which this article is taken contains reviews which illustrate his theory.

BOOK REVIEWING

I NOTICE that in Mr. Secker's *Art and Craft of Letters* series no volume on book-reviewing has yet been announced. A volume on criticism has been published, it is true, but book-reviewing is something different from criticism. It swings somewhere between criticism on the one hand and reporting on the other. When Mr. Arthur Bourchier a few years ago, in the course of a dispute about Mr. Walkley's criticisms, spoke of the dramatic critic as a dramatic reporter, he did a very insolent thing. But there was a certain reasonableness in his phrase. The critic on the Press is a news-gatherer as surely as the man who is sent to describe a public meeting or a strike. Whether he is asked to write a report on a play of Mr. Shaw's or an exhibition of etchings by Mr. Bone or a volume of short stories by Mr. Conrad or a speech by Mr. Asquith or a strike on the Clyde, his function is the same. It is primarily to give an account, a description, of what he has seen or heard or read. This may seem to many people — especially to critics — a degrading conception of a book-reviewer's work. But it is quite the contrary. A great deal of book-reviewing at the present time is dead matter. Book-reviews ought at least to be alive as news.

At present everybody is ready to write book-reviews. This is because nearly everybody believes that they are the easiest kind of thing to write. People who would shrink from offering to write poems or leading articles or descriptive sketches of football matches, have an idea that reviewing books is something with the capacity for which every man is born,

as he is born with the capacity for talking prose. They think it is as easy as having opinions. It is simply making a few remarks at the end of a couple of hours spent with a book in an armchair. Many men and women — novelists, barristers, professors and others — review books in their spare time, as they look on this as work they can do when their brains are too tired to do anything which is of genuine importance. A great deal of book-reviewing is done contemptuously, as though to review books well were not as difficult as to do anything else well. This is perhaps due in some measure to the fact that, for the amount of hard work it involves, book-reviewing is one of the worst-paid branches of journalism. The hero of Mr. Beresford's new novel, *The Invisible Event*, makes an income of £250 a year as an outside reviewer, and it is by no means every outside reviewer who makes as much as that from reviewing alone. It is not that there is not an immense public which reads book-reviews. Mr. T. P. O'Connor showed an admirable journalistic instinct when twenty years or so ago he filled the front page of the *Weekly Sun* with a long book-review. The sale of the *Times Literary Supplement*, since it became a separate publication, is evidence that, for good or bad, many thousands of readers have acquired the habit of reading criticism of current literature.

But I do not think that the mediocre quality of most book-reviewing is due to low payment. It is a result, I believe, of a wrong conception of what a book-review should be. My own opinion is that a review should be, from one point of view, a portrait of a book. It should present the book instead of merely presenting remarks about the book. In reviewing, portraiture is more important than opinion. One has to get the reflexion of the book, and not a mere comment on it, down on paper. Obviously, one must not press this theory of portraiture too far. It is useful chiefly as a protest against the curse of comment. Many clever

writers, when they come to write book-reviews, instead of portraying the book, waste their time in remarks to the effect that the book should never have been written, and so forth. That, in fact, is the usual attitude of clever reviewers when they begin. They are so horrified to find that Mr. William Le Queux does not write like Dostoevsky and that Mrs. Florence Barclay lacks the grandeur of Æschylus that they run amok among their contemporaries with something of the furious destructiveness of Don Quixote on his adventures. It is the noble intolerance of youth; but how unreasonable it is! Suppose a portrait painter were suddenly to take his sitter by the throat on the ground that he had no right to exist. One would say to him that that was not his business: his business is to take the man's existence for granted, and to paint him till he becomes in a new sense alive. If he is worthless, paint his worthlessness, but do not merely comment on it. There is no reason why a portrait should be flattering, but it should be a portrait. It may be a portrait in the grand manner, or a portrait in caricature: if it expresses its subject honestly and delightfully, that is all we can ask of it. A critical portrait of a book by Mr. Le Queux may be amazingly alive: a censorious comment can only be dull. Mr. Hubert Bland was at one time an almost ideal portrait painter of commonplace novels. He obviously liked them, as the caricaturist likes the people in the street. The novels themselves might not be readable, but Mr. Bland's reviews of them were. He could reveal their characteristics in a few strokes, which would tell you more of what you wanted to know about them than a whole dictionary of adjectives of praise and blame. One could tell at a glance whether the book had any literary value, whether it was worth turning to as a stimulant, whether it was even intelligent of its kind. One would not like to see Mr. Bland's method too slavishly adopted by reviewers: it was suitable

only for portraying certain kinds of books. But it is worth recalling as the method of a man who, dealing with books that were for the most part insipid and worthless, made his reviews delightfully alive as well as admirably interpretative.

The comparison of a review to a portrait fixes attention on one essential quality of a book-review. A reviewer should never forget his responsibility to his subject. He must allow nothing to distract him from his main task of setting down the features of his book vividly and recognizably. One may say this even while admitting that the most delightful book-reviews of modern times — for the literary causeries of Anatole France may fairly be classified as book-reviews — were the revolt of an escaped angel against the limitations of a journalistic form. But Anatole France happens to be a man of genius, and genius is a justification of any method. In the hands of a pinchbeck Anatole France, how unendurable the review conceived as a causerie would become! Anatole France observes that " all books in general, and even the most admirable, seem to me infinitely less precious for what they contain than for what he who reads puts into them." That, in a sense, is true. But no reviewer ought to believe it. His duty is to his author: whatever he " puts into " him is a subsidiary matter. " The critic," says Anatole France again, " must imbue himself thoroughly with the idea that every book has as many different aspects as it has readers, and that a poem, like a landscape, is transformed in all the eyes that see it, in all the souls that conceive it." Here he gets nearer the idea of criticism as portraiture, and practically every critic of importance has been a portrait-painter. In this respect Sainte-Beuve is at one with Macaulay, Pater with Matthew Arnold, Anatole France (occasionally) with Henry James. They may portray authors rather than books, artists rather than their works, but this

only means that criticism at its highest is a study of the mind of the artist as reflected in his art.

Clearly, if the reviewer can paint the portrait of an author, he is achieving something better even than the portrait of a book. But what, at all costs, he must avoid doing is to substitute for a portrait of one kind or another the rag-bag of his own moral, political or religious opinions. It is one of the most difficult things in the world for anyone who happens to hold strong opinions not to make the mind of Shakespeare himself a pulpit from which to roar them at the world. Reviewers with theories about morality and religion can seldom be induced to come to the point of portraiture until they have enjoyed a preliminary half-column of self-explanation. In their eyes a review is a moral essay rather than an imaginative interpretation. In dissenting from this view, one is not pleading for a race of reviewers without moral or religious ideas, or even prepossessions. One is merely urging that in a review, as in a novel or a play, the moral should be seated at the heart instead of sprawling all over the surface. In the well-worn phrase, it should be implicit, not explicit. Undoubtedly a rare critic of genius can make an interesting review-article out of a statement of his moral and political ideas. But that only justifies the article as an essay, not as a review. To many reviewers — especially in the bright days of youth — it seems an immensely more important thing to write a good essay than a good review. And so it is, but not when a review is wanted. It is a far, far better thing to write a good essay about America than a good review of a book about America. But the one should not be substituted for the other. If one takes up a review of a book on America by Mr. Wells or Mr. Bennett, it is in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred in order to find out what the author thinks, not what the reviewer thinks. If the reviewer begins with a paragraph of general remarks

about America — or, worse still, about some abstract thing like liberty — he is almost invariably wasting paper. I believe it is a sound rule to destroy all preliminary paragraphs of this kind. They are detestable in almost all writing, but most detestable of all in book-reviews, where it is important to plunge all at once into the middle of things. I say this, though there is an occasional book-reviewer whose preliminary paragraphs I would not miss for worlds. But one has even known book-reviewers who wrote delightful articles, though they made scarcely any reference to the books under review at all.

To my mind, nothing more clearly shows the general misconception of the purpose of a book-review than the attitude of the majority of journalists to the quotational review. It is the custom to despise the quotational review — to dismiss it as mere "gutting." As a consequence, it is generally very badly done. It is done as if under the impression that it does not matter what quotations one gives so long as one fills the space. One great paper lends support to this contemptuous attitude towards quotational criticism by refusing to pay its contributors for space taken up by quotations. A London evening newspaper was once guilty of the same folly. A reviewer on the staff of the latter confessed to me that to the present day he finds it impossible, without an effort, to make quotations in a review, because of the memory of those days when to quote was to add to one's poverty. Despised work is seldom done well, and it is not surprising that it is almost more seldom that one finds a quotational review well done than any other sort. Yet how critically illuminating a quotation may be! There are many books in regard to which quotation is the only criticism necessary. Books of memoirs and books of verse — the least artistic as well as the most artistic forms of literature — both lend themselves to it. To criticise verse without giving quotations is to leave

one largely in ignorance of the quality of the verse. The selection of passages to quote is at least as fine a test of artistic judgment as any comment the critic can make. In regard to books of memoirs, gossip, and so forth, one does not ask for a test of delicate artistic judgment. Books of this kind should simply be rummaged for entertaining "news." To review them well is to make an anthology of (in a wide sense) amusing passages. There is no other way to portray them. And yet I have known a very brilliant reviewer take a book of gossip about the German Court and, instead of quoting any of the numerous things that would interest people, fill half a column with abuse of the way in which the book was written, of the inconsequence of the chapters, of the second-handness of many of the anecdotes. Now, I do not object to any of these charges being brought. It is well that "made" books should not be palmed off on the public as literature. On the other hand, a mediocre book (from the point of view of literature or history) is no excuse for a mediocre review. No matter how mediocre a book is, if it is on a subject of great interest, it usually contains enough vital matter to make an exciting half-column. Many reviewers despise a bad book so heartily that, instead of squeezing every drop of interest out of it, as they ought to do, they refrain from squeezing a single drop of interest out of it. They are frequently people who suffer from anecdotophobia. "Scorn not the anecdote" is a motto that might be modestly hung up in the heart of every reviewer. After all, Montaigne did not scorn it, and there is no reason why the modern journalist should be ashamed of following so respectable an example. One can quite easily understand how the gluttony of many publishers for anecdotes has driven writers with a respect for their intellect into revolt. But let us not be unjust to the anecdote because it has been cheapened through no fault of its own. We may be sure of one

thing. A review — a review, at any rate, of a book of memoirs or any similar kind of non-literary book — which contains an anecdote is better than a review which does not contain an anecdote. If an anecdotal review is bad, it is because it is badly done, not because it is anecdotal. This, one might imagine, is too obvious to require saying; but many men of brains go through life without ever being able to see it.

One of the chief virtues of the anecdote is that it brings the reviewer down from his generalizations to individual instances. Generalizations mixed with instances make a fine sort of review, but to flow on for a column of generalizations without ever pausing to light them into life with instances, concrete examples, anecdotes, is to write not a book-review but a sermon. Of the two, the sermon is much the easier to write: it does not involve the trouble of constant reference to one's authorities. Perhaps, however, someone with practice in writing sermons will argue that the sermon without instances is as somniferous as the book-review with the same want. Whether that is so or not, the book-review is not, as a rule, a place for abstract argument. Not that one wants to shut out controversy. There is no pleasanter review to read than a controversial review. Even here, however, one demands portrait as well as argument. It is, in nine cases out of ten, waste of time to assail a theory when you can portray a man. It always seems to me to be hopelessly wrong for the reviewer of biographies, critical studies, or books of a similar kind, to allow his mind to wander from the main figure in the book to the discussion of some theory or other that has been incidentally put forward. Thus, in a review of a book on Stevenson, the important thing is to reconstruct the figure of Stevenson, the man and the artist. This is much more vitally interesting and relevant than theorizing on such questions as whether the writing of prose

or of poetry is the more difficult art, or what are the essential characteristics of romance. These and many other questions may arise, and it is the proper task of the reviewer to discuss them, so long as their discussion is kept subordinate to the portraiture of the central figure. But they must not be allowed to push the leading character in the whole business right out of the review. If they are brought in at all, they must be brought in, like moral sentiments, inoffensively by the way.

In pleading that a review should be a portrait of a book to a vastly greater degree than it is a direct comment on a book, I am not pleading that it should be a mere bald summary. The summary kind of review is no more a portrait than is the Scotland Yard description of a man wanted by the police. Portraiture implies selection and a new emphasis. The synopsis of the plot of a novel is as far from being a good review as is a paragraph of general comment on it. The review must justify itself, not as a reflection of dead bones, but by a new life of its own.

Further, I am not pleading for the suppression of comment and, if need be, condemnation. But either to praise or condemn without instances is dull. Neither the one nor the other is the chief thing in the review. They are the crown of the review, but not its life. There are many critics to whom condemnation of books they do not like seems the chief end of man. They regard themselves as engaged upon a holy war against the Devil and his works. Horace complained that it was only poets who were not allowed to be mediocre. The modern critic — I should say the modern critic of the censorious kind, not the critic who looks on it as his duty to puff out meaningless superlatives over every book that appears — will not allow any author to be mediocre. The war against mediocrity is a necessary war, but I cannot help thinking that mediocrity is more likely to yield

to humour than to contemptuous abuse. Apart from this, it is the reviewer's part to maintain high standards for work that aims at being literature, rather than to career about, like a destroying angel, among books that have no such aim. Criticism, Anatole France has said, is the record of the soul's adventures among masterpieces. What, then, are his standards to be? Well, a man must judge linen as linen, cotton as cotton, and shoddy as shoddy. It is ridiculous to denounce any of them for not being silk. To do so is not to apply high standards so much as to apply wrong standards. One has no right as a reviewer to judge a book by any standard save that which the author aims at reaching. As a private reader, one has the right to say of a novel by Mr. Joseph Hocking, for instance: "This is not literature. This is not realism. This does not interest me. This is awful." I do not say that these sentences can be fairly used of any of Mr. Hocking's novels. I merely take him as an example of a popular novelist who would be bound to be condemned if judged by comparison with Flaubert or Meredith or even Mr. Galsworthy. But the reviewer is not asked to state whether he finds Mr. Hocking readable so much as to state the kind of readableness at which Mr. Hocking aims and the measure of his success in achieving it. It is the reviewer's business to discover the quality of a book rather than to keep announcing that the quality does not appeal to him. Not that he need conceal the fact that it has failed to appeal to him, but he should remember that this is a comparatively irrelevant matter. He may make it as clear as day — indeed, he ought to make it as clear as day, if it is his opinion — that he regards the novels of Charles Garvice as shoddy, but he ought also to make it clear whether they are the kind of shoddy that serves its purpose.

Is this to lower literary standards? I do not think so, for, in cases of this kind, one is not judging literature, but pop-

ular books. Those to whom popular books are anathema have a temperament which will always find it difficult to fall in with the limitations of the work of a general reviewer. The curious thing is that this intolerance of easy writing is most generally found among those who are opposed to intolerance in the sphere of morals. It is as though they had escaped from one sort of Puritanism into another. Personally, I do not see why, if we should be tolerant of the breach of a moral commandment, we should not be equally tolerant of the breach of a literary commandment. We should gently scan, not only our brother man, but our brother author. The æsthete of to-day, however, will look kindly on adultery, but show all the harshness of a Pilgrim Father in his condemnation of a split infinitive. I cannot see the logic of this. If irregular and commonplace people have the right to exist, surely irregular and commonplace books have a right to exist by their side.

The reviewer, however, is often led into a false attitude to a book, not by its bad quality, but by some irrelevant quality — some underlying moral or political idea. He denounces a novel the moral ideas of which offend him, without giving sufficient consideration to the success or failure of the novelist in the effort to make his characters live. Similarly, he praises a novel with the moral ideas of which he agrees, without reflecting that perhaps it is as a tract rather than as a work of art that it has given him pleasure. Both the praise and blame which have been heaped upon Mr. Kipling are largely due to appreciation or dislike of his politics. The Imperialist finds his heart beating faster as he reads *The English Flag,* and he praises Mr. Kipling as an artist when it is really Mr. Kipling as a propagandist who has moved him. The anti-Imperialist, on the other hand, is often led by detestation of Mr. Kipling's politics to deny even the palpable fact that Mr. Kipling is a very brilliant short-story teller.

It is for the reviewer to raise himself above such prejudices and to discover what are Mr. Kipling's ideas apart from his art, and what is his art apart from his ideas.

The relation between one and the other is also clearly a relevant matter for discussion. But the confusion of one with the other is fatal. In the field of morals we are perhaps led astray in our judgments even more frequently than in matters of politics. Mr. Shaw's plays are often denounced by critics whom they have made laugh till their sides ached, and the reason is that, after leaving the theatre, the critics remember that they do not like Mr. Shaw's moral ideas. In the same way, it seems to me, a great deal of the praise that has been given to Mr. D. H. Lawrence as an artist ought really to be given to him as a distributor of certain moral ideas. That he has studied wonderfully one aspect of human nature, that he can describe wonderfully some aspects of external nature, I know; but I doubt whether his art is fine enough or sympathetic enough to make enthusiastic anyone who differs from the moral attitude, as it may be called, of his stories. This is the real test of a work of art — has it sufficient imaginative vitality to capture the imagination of artistic readers who are not in sympathy with its point of view? The *Book of Job* survives the test: it is a book to the spell of which no imaginative man could be indifferent, whether Christian, Jew or atheist. Similarly, Shelley is read and written about with enthusiasm by many who hold moral, religious and political ideas directly contrary to his own. Mr. Kipling's *Recessional,* with its sombre imaginative glow, its recapturing of Old Testament prides and fears, commands the praise of thousands to whom much of the rest of his poetry is the abominable thing. It is the reviewer's task to discover imagination even in those who are the enemies of the ideas he cherishes. In so far as he cannot do this, he fails in his business as a critic of the arts.

It may be said in answer to all this, however, that to appeal for tolerance in book-reviewers is not necessary. The Press is already overcrowded with laudations of commonplace books. Not a day passes but at least a dozen books are praised as having " not a dull moment," being " readable from cover to cover," and as reminding the reviewer of Stevenson, Meredith, Oscar Wilde, Paul de Kock, and Jane Austen. That is not the kind of tolerance which one is eager to see. That kind of review is scarcely different from a publisher's advertisement. Besides, it usually sins in being mere summary and comment, or even comment without summary. It is a thoughtless scattering of acceptable words and is as unlike the review conceived as a portrait as is the hostile kind of commentatory review which I have been discussing. It is generally the comment of a lazy brain, instead of being, like the other, the comment of a clever brain. Praise is the vice of the commonplace reviewer, just as censoriousness is the vice of the more clever sort. Not that one wishes either praise or censure to be stinted. One is merely anxious not to see them mis-applied. It is a vice, not a virtue, of reviewing to be lukewarm either in the one or the other. What one desires most of all in a reviewer, after a capacity to portray books, is the courage of his opinions, so that, whether he is face to face with an old reputation like Mr. Conrad's or a new reputation like Mr. Mackenzie's, he will boldly express his enthusiasms and his dissatisfactions without regard to the estimate of the author, which is, for the moment, " in the air." What seems to be wanted, then, in a book-reviewer is that, without being servile, he should be swift to praise, and that, without being censorious, he should have the courage to blame. While tolerant of kinds in literature, he should be intolerant of pretentiousness. He should be less patient, for instance, of a pseudo-Milton than of a writer who frankly aimed at nothing higher than a book of music-hall songs.

He should be more eager to define the qualities of a book than to heap comment upon comment. If — I hope the image is not too strained — he draws a book from the life, he will produce a better review than if he spends his time calling it names, whether foul or fair.

But what of the equipment of the reviewer? it may be asked. What of his standards? One of the faults of modern reviewing seems to me to be that the standards of many critics are derived almost entirely from the literature of the last thirty years. This is especially so with some American critics, who rush feverishly into print with volumes spotted with the names of modern writers as Christmas pudding is spotted with currants. To read them is to get the impression that the world is only a hundred years old. It seems to me that Matthew Arnold was right when he urged men to turn to the classics for their standards. His definition of the classics may have been too narrow, and nothing could be more utterly dead than a criticism which tries to measure imaginative literature by an academic standard or the rules of Aristotle. But it is only those to whom the classics are themselves dead who are likely to lay this academic dead hand on new literature. Besides, even the most academic standards are valuable in a world in which chaos is hailed with enthusiasm both in art and in politics. But, when all is said, the taste which is the essential quality of a critic is something with which he is born. It is something which is not born of reading Sophocles and Plato and does not perish of reading Miss Marie Corelli. This taste must illuminate all the reviewer's portraits. Without it, he had far better be a coach-builder than a reviewer of books. It is this taste in the background that gives distinction to a tolerant and humorous review of even the most unambitious detective story.

THE SOUL AS IT IS, AND HOW TO DEAL WITH IT

GILBERT MURRAY

Mr. Gilbert Murray is a rare instance of the specialist in literature who plays an influential part in public affairs. Primarily a classical scholar, Regius Professor of Greek in Oxford, he is well known to the general public by his brilliant translations of Euripides and Æschylus. In recent years he has been active on behalf of the League of Nations. His scholarly training is reflected in the mode of his analysis, in his choice of illustrations, and in the judicious temper which pervades the essay; his practical idealism lies at the root of his thought. *A Soul As It Is* is an address delivered before a group of theological students in 1917, in what was almost the darkest moment of the war for England. At such a moment the question of the rights of the individual conscience against the demands of organized society might to many persons seem untimely. At any rate, it was a question which the churches, the proper spokesmen for the soul, deliberately evaded. With great courage, but also with great tact and scrupulous care, Professor Murray came to the defence of the sincere "conscientious objector," defending him not on the ground of abstract right (for that is a claim to which little heed is ever paid in a practical crisis) but on the deeper and more vital ground of the injury which a nation does to itself when it persecutes those who embody the finest spirituality of its people. (The essay appeared in the *Hibbert Journal,* January, 1918, and was reprinted in *Essays and Addresses,* 1921.)

THE SOUL AS IT IS, AND HOW TO DEAL WITH IT

I

IN Tolstoy's novel, *The Cossacks,* there is a scene where a man swimming is shot dead and drifts to the shore, while his slayer swims over the flooded river to get him and crouches down exhausted at his side. There the two lie, looking almost the same. But one is full of a turmoil of desires and aspirations, mingled feelings of pride and misery; and the other is dead. And the only sign of difference is a light steam rising from the body of the living man.

So small a sign, and yet all the difference that can be!

A distinguished anthropologist, Dr. Elliot Smith, has suggested to us the kind of speculation that would go on in the mind of a primitive man if he found a dead body preserved, as it might be, for instance, in the dry Egyptian sand — the phenomenon that led up to the practice of embalmment. What is wrong with that body in the sand? What is it that it lacks? First of all, it does not breathe. There is no breath in it; that strikes our Egyptian; so he gives it breath as best he can, burning incense under its nostrils, so that the breath may enter in, warm like the breath of the living, and fragrant to correct the smell of the corpse. Again, it is all dry, there is no blood in it: and our Egyptian knows that the blood is the life, because he has seen wounded men die as their blood ebbed away. So he pours libations of blood into the grave, that the dead may get their life again. Some of us will remember the weird passage in the Eleventh Book of the

Odyssey, where Odysseus sees the ghosts of the departed, like puffs of wind made visible, as it were; *ψυχὴ καὶ εἴδωλον,* "a breath and an image," and no more; with no life nor power of thought till they have drunk the blood that he has poured out for them.

If you start thus from the dead body, it seems as if the life or soul lay in some breath or spirit that has departed. Most of our words for the soul show that origin. The word "soul" itself is of doubtful derivation; but "ghost" means "breath," "spirit" means breath. In Latin *spiritus* and *animus* and *anima* are simply breath or wind; in Greek *ψυχὴ* is wind, and *πνεῦμα* breath, and *θυμὸς* smoke or vapour. All the words are metaphors; naturally and inevitably so. For whenever mankind notices a new fact and wants to find a name for it, he must needs search about for something like it among the facts he already knows and has names for. The new fact does not come with a name ready written upon it.

The word "life," oddly enough, means "body." I think that comes from another line of thought, in which mankind, when trying to express the thing we call soul or life, started not from the dead body but from a dream-image or phantom. A dream-image, a shape seen in hallucination, a reflection in water or a looking-glass: what is wrong with them, and how are they lacking in the life of the living? Why, they are like those ghosts in Homer. There is "a breath and an image," but no heart or blood or solidity. They are not real. If they could drink of blood and grow solid, if they could get themselves a body, that would be life.

Another mode of thought which started from the dream-image conceived that that image itself was the soul or life; that it moved out of the body in sleep, and sometimes in waking time; moved out and drifted far away at its will and pleasure, with always the possible danger of losing its way

and not being able to return to the body. That mode of thought explains the curious pictures in ancient times of the soul as a little human being, sometimes with wings and sometimes without, who lives inside the ordinary body and keeps it alive. There is a common phrase in Homer describing death: "the life left the bones." The word for life there is *thumos,* the word that means smoke or vapour; but the old vase-paintings which depict that kind of death show not a smoke but a beautiful little winged human figure springing out from the body as it falls, and rising heavenward.

II

What does all this amount to? What conclusion can we draw from these stumbling efforts of instinctive man to describe or name or depict this thing within us, which no man has ever seen or heard or touched, and yet which makes the greatest of all differences, the difference between the living and the dead?

I think we can conclude just thus much, that there is something really there, and that man's powers of thought and language, trained as they are on the experience of the material world, have been unable to define or comprehend it. Our modern phraseology is practically all derived from the Greeks, and the Greeks went on using metaphors to the end. If the indescribable thing was not a breath or a wind, then it was a spark of fire; but not ordinary fire, which destroys and perishes; rather the celestial fire of which the stars are made, the stars which neither consume nor are consumed. Or is it a fragment, as it were, of God Himself prisoned in our earthly material, imperfect because fragmentary, yet in some way akin to the Most High? No need to trouble with further attempts at such description; the main result that remains from these broken speculations, on which the world

has been living ever since, is the profound conviction of Greek philosophy that man, in some unexplained way, consists of two parts, of which one is living and one dead. "What art thou?" said the Emperor Marcus Aurelius to himself. *"A little soul carrying a corpse."*

Plato, the earliest author who discusses and supports with argument the great doctrine that the soul is immortal — that the soul is life, and therefore cannot die — is fond of metaphors about the soul. He is unconsciously founding a new science, that "science of the soul" which we call psychology. His first division of the soul is a very fruitful and interesting one. How is it that the soul shows itself in action? In other words, how is it that a man shows he is really alive? There are three ways, says Plato, desire and anger and reason; or — since it is hard to get words simple and large enough to express the Greek, by Lusting, Fighting and Thinking. There are things it craves for, and things it hates and rejects; but above the craving and rejecting there is a power of judging, of distinguishing between good and evil and shaping its own course. This power, which he calls reason and we moderns mostly call "will," is the very soul itself. The lusting and fighting, though they may serve the soul, and are forms of life, are mere functions of the live body. A man's soul, he says in another fine passage, is like a charioteer upon a chariot with two horses. One of the horses is sluggish, lazy, tending always downward; the other fierce, but of generous nature and full of courage; and the man who drives them has to master the two of them, keep them abreast, and above all choose for himself the path he means them to take. The charioteer is the real soul.

"A little soul carrying a corpse": what is there wrong about that description, or rather, what would be wrong with it if it were ever meant to be literally and exactly true? It is that it separates the body and soul too sharply. That is

the mistake in all these primitive conceptions with which we have been dealing, and consequently in a great deal of our own current language, which of course is descended, as all language is, from the philosophy of earlier times. If you have a lump of hot iron, the thought of primitive man will probably regard it as made up of two separate things, heat and a lump of iron. Just as we have certain pictures by savages — and I believe also by children — in which an angry man is shown by drawing first a man, and second his anger, seated inside him or sticking out of his head. Just as in primitive poetry a man constantly holds conversations with his own heart or his own thought, as if it were a separate thing. It was another Greek philosopher, Aristotle, who cleared that matter up. You meet angry men, not first anger and then men; you meet live persons, not first a life or soul and then a body which it is carrying about. But with that passing caution against possible misunderstanding we shall find it simpler to use the ordinary language, and speak as if the body and the breath or soul inside it were entirely different things.

"A little soul carrying a corpse": the modern writer who has made that old Stoic phrase most clear to the average reader is, I think, M. Bergson. To him man consists of a body which is so much matter, governed by the law of gravitation and all the other laws of dead matter, governed also by the laws of biology or animate matter; and a soul or will — Plato's charioteer — which is free and moves of itself. How the will can be free, of course, is one of those problems which no one can satisfactorily explain. It seems impossible to understand how it can be free; yet almost more impossible to imagine that it is not free. It is an old problem, perhaps an eternal one. But M. Bergson's special contribution to it, if I understand him aright, is this.

The body is of course subject to mechanical and biolog-

ical law. Throw it up in the air, it will fall down again. Hit it hard enough, it will break. Starve it, and it will suffer and die. And the exact strain necessary in each case can, within limits, be calculated. Furthermore, for much the greater part of life the will — that is, the man himself — acts automatically, like a machine. He is given bad coffee for breakfast, and he gets cross. He sees his omnibus just going, and he runs. He sees in one advertisement that X's boot polish is the best, and on another that Y's boot polish is the best, and he accepts both statements. He does not criticize or assert himself. He follows steadily the line of least resistance. The charioteer is asleep, and the two horses jog along without waking him.

But, says M. Bergson, you will sometimes find that when you expect him to follow the line of least resistance he just does not. The charioteer awakes. He can resist, he can choose; he is after all a live and free thing in the midst of a dead world, capable of acting against the pressure of matter, against pain, and against his own desires.

Whether this doctrine is exactly true or not, I do not pretend to judge; but it certainly is fruitful. It is just what one feels in one's ordinary experience: a constant tendency to behave like dead matter, to fall into habits, to become by slow degrees — as the ancients put it — "a chained slave." You are chained by your own standard of comfort; by your conception of what is necessary for you; by your meal-times and the conventions you live among; by the things that you always say or always do or always have. Bergson has for middle-aged men added a new terror to life. He makes you watch yourself becoming mechanical; moving in conformity to outside stimulus; growing more and more dependent on your surroundings — as if the little soul carrying the corpse had found it too heavy and was letting it lie, or perhaps roll, while the soul itself fell half asleep. Fortunately from time

to time it wakes, and when it does wake its strength is amazing. A friend of mine wrote to me from amid the heaviest fighting on the Somme, describing the strange impression he received from that awful experience of the utter difference between man's soul and body; the body is so weak and frail a stuff, so easily broken, scattered, torn to rags, or trodden indistinguishably into mire; and the soul so resolute, so untouched and unconquerable.

III

Untouched and unconquerable: those, I think, were my friend's words, and that was the impression which he received. The German shells and bombs and bullets tore men's bodies to pieces without any trouble, but they could not touch the men's souls or change their will. I do not wonder that he received that impression. Yet, is the impression absolutely true? Can we really, without qualification, believe the common, comfortable doctrine that persecution always fails, that the blood of martyrs is always the seed of the Church, that the soul is really unconquerable? The average man does not believe it, much less the ordinary tyrant. In every country he treats such doctrines as mere sentiment, and is perfectly confident that if you give him a free hand with rifle, bayonet and cat-o'-nine-tails he can stamp out any inconvenient doctrine which puts its trust in nothing more substantial than the soul of man. And I fear the tyrant is not always wrong. Why are there no Protestants in Spain? Not because of the persuasiveness of Spanish theology, but because the Spanish Inquisition did its work. Why are there no descendants of the Albigenses in France? Because they were massacred.

No. We must not delude ourselves into believing that the path of the human soul or conscience when protesting against

the world is a safe path, or a path that must in the end lead to victory. It is neither. It leads for certain through suffering and humiliation; and it may also, it may ultimately, end in defeat. There is no certainty for the protesting soul anywhere; except the certainty of a great uncertainty, of a great battle of unknown issue, in which the odds are by no means as they appear. The big battalions of the world on one side, and the one little soul or group of souls on the other — they are not so unevenly matched after all. The little soul starts indeed with one great handicap against it — it has first to carry its own corpse, and then fight. But if it can do that, if it can get comparatively free from that burden and those entangling chains, get rid of desire and ambition, and hatred and even anger, and think of nothing but what it wills as right, then it is, I will not say unconquerable, but one of the most formidable fighting forces that exist upon this earth.

The doctrine that the persecutor is always defeated and the martyr always triumphant is, I think, little more than mere comfort-seeking, a by-form of the common vulgar worship of success. We can give great strings of names belonging to the martyrs who were successful, who, whether living or dead, eventually won their causes, and are honoured with books and statues by a grateful posterity. But what of the martyrs who have failed — who beat against iron bars, and suffered and were conquered, who appealed from unjust judges and found no listeners, who died deserted and disapproved by their own people, and have left behind them no name or memorial? How many Belgians, and Serbs, and Poles, how many brave followers of Liebknecht in Germany itself, have been murdered in silence for obeying their consciences, and their memory perhaps blasted by a false official statement, so that even their example does not live? In ancient Athens there was, beside the ordinary altars of

worship, an altar to the Unknown God. There ought to be in our hearts, whenever we think with worship and gratitude of the great men who have been deliverers or helpers of the human race, an altar to the unknown martyrs who have suffered for the right and failed.

IV

But let us stop a moment. When the soul of man thus stands up against the world, is it necessarily always in the right? Because a man holds a belief so firmly that he will submit to prison and death rather than forswear it, does it follow that the belief is true? Obviously not in the least. In every great moral conflict of history you have had martyrs on both sides. Christians and Pagans, Arians and Trinitarians, Catholics and Protestants, have killed each other and died themselves for their respective beliefs, and more particularly for those particular parts of them which most directly contradicted the beliefs of the other side. Martyrs are not always right. Indeed, I am not sure that if you took the whole faith for which a particular martyr suffers — the whole mass of passionate beliefs by which he is really at the time actuated — I am not sure you would not find that martyrs were almost always considerably wrong. A man does not usually reach the point where he is willing to die for a cause without getting his passions strongly interwoven with his beliefs; and when a belief is mixed with passion, as we all know, it is almost certain to deviate from truth. If you ever wish, as we all sometimes do, to punish someone who differs from you, and to go on punishing him till he agrees with you, it is no good arguing that your victim is not a martyr because he is wrong or even wicked in his beliefs; a great many martyrs have been wrong, and their persecutors have always thought them both wrong and wicked. It is

still more irrelevant to condemn the martyr for being inconsistent: for two reasons. First, there is no person known to history, neither priest nor philosopher, nor statesman, nor even mathematician, who has yet succeeded in building a complete theory of life which has no inconsistencies in it. The best we can do is to be consistent in some little corner of life, or in dealing with some immediate practical problem. And further, it would be absurd to say that a man must not take any step until he had made sure that the whole of his life was consistent with it. If a man wants to behave in some respect better than he has behaved before, it is practically certain that the new and better part of his life will not be consistent with all the other parts of it which he is not attending to. To reproach such a man for inconsistency is equivalent to asking him to remain always at the lowest level of which he is capable — though as a matter of fact he would not attain consistency even then.

You must not be surprised then at a martyr being wrong, and you must not dream of expecting him to be in all of his beliefs consistent.

What can you expect of him, then? I think all you can expect is sincerity of belief and purity of motive. If he is a fool, if he is prejudiced, if he is muddle-headed, if he is misled, if he is exasperating, even if he has certain grave faults of character in other respects, he can still be a martyr, and be entitled to a martyr's reward. But if he is insincere, if he is lying; if, when professing to suffer for the right and the truth, he is really seeking his own advantage, and saying things which he does not believe, then he is done for; there is nothing more to be said about him; he is not a martyr, but a mere ordinary humbug. And no doubt one of the troubles of a Government which has to deal with people who of set purpose and principle defy a particular law, is to make out which are martyrs and which humbugs. And this is a mat-

ter of more consequence than may at first appear. For it is a very dangerous thing to allow people by mere cunning and obstinacy and self-advertisement in breaking the law to rise into public fame and to undermine that fabric of mutual agreement which holds society together; a nation in which any well-organized rebels could safely defy the law would soon almost cease to be a free nation. And, on the other hand, a nation in which the Government seems to be forcing men into sin against their conscience, so that good people instinctively respect the prisoner and condemn the judge, has already ceased to be a free nation. You remember the old words of Gamaliel: "Lest haply ye be found to be fighting against God." It is a serious thing for any organ of material power to be found fighting against the human soul.

V

Let me take a present-day instance of this battle between a soul and a Government, a very curious instance, because it is almost impossible without more knowledge than most people in England possess to say who was wrong and who right.

About the year 1889 a young Indian student, called Mohandar Karamchand Gandhi, came to England to study law. He was rich and clever, of a cultivated family, gentle and modest in his manner. He dressed and behaved like other people. There was nothing particular about him to show that he had already taken a Jain vow to abstain from wine, from flesh, and from sexual intercourse. He took his degrees and became a successful lawyer in Bombay, but he cared more for religion than law. Gradually his asceticism increased. He gave away all his money to good causes except the meagrest allowance. He took vows of poverty. He ceased to practise at the law because his religion — a mys-

ticism which seems to be as closely related to Christianity as it is to any traditional Indian religion — forbade him to take part in a system which tried to do right by violence. When I met him in England, in 1914, he ate, I believe, only rice, and drank only water, and slept on the floor; and his wife, who seemed to be his companion in everything, lived in the same way. His conversation was that of a cultivated and well-read man with a certain indefinable suggestion of saintliness. His patriotism, which was combined with an enthusiastic support of England against Germany, is interwoven with his religion, and aims at the moral regeneration of India on the lines of Indian thought, with no barriers between one Indian and another, and to the exclusion as far as possible of the influence of the West, with its industrial slavery, its material civilization, its money-worship and its wars. (I am merely stating this view, of course, not either criticizing it or suggesting that it is right.)

Oriental peoples, perhaps owing to causes connected with their form of civilization, are apt to be enormously influenced by great saintliness of character when they see it. Like all great masses of ignorant people, however, they need some very plain and simple test to assure them that their hero is really a saint and not a humbug, and the test they habitually apply is that of self-denial. Take vows of poverty, live on rice and water, and they will listen to your preaching, as several of our missionaries have found; come to them eating and drinking and dressed in expensive European clothes — and they feel differently. It is far from a perfect test, but there is something in it. At any rate I am told that Gandhi's influence in India is now enormous, almost equal to that of his friend the late Mr. Gokhale.

And now for the battle. In South Africa there are some 150,000 Indians, chiefly in Natal; and the South African Government, feeling that the colour question in its territories

was quite sufficiently difficult already, determined to prevent the immigration of any more Indians, and if possible to expel those who were already there. This last could not be done. It would have violated a treaty; it was opposed by Natal, where much of the industry depended on Indian labor; and it was objected to by the Indian Government and the Home Government. Then began a long struggle. The whites of South Africa determined to make life in South Africa undesirable, if not for all Indians, at least for all Indians above the coolie class. Indians were specially taxed, were made to register in a degrading way; they were classed with negroes; their thumb-prints were taken by the police as if they were criminals. If, owing to the scruples of the Government, the law was in any case too lenient, patriotic mobs undertook to remedy the defect. Quite early in the struggle the Indians in South Africa asked Mr. Gandhi to come and help them. He came as a barrister in 1893; he was forbidden to plead. He proved his right to plead; he won his case against the Asiatic Exclusion Act on grounds of constitutional law, and returned to India. The relief which the Indians had expected was not realized. Gandhi came again in 1895. He was mobbed and nearly killed at Durban. I will not tell in detail how he settled down eventually in South Africa as a leader and counsellor to his people; how he founded a settlement in the country outside Durban, where the workers should live directly on the land, and all be bound by a vow of poverty. For many years he was engaged in constant passive resistance to the Government and constant efforts to raise and ennoble the inward life of the Indian Community. But he was unlike other strikers or resisters in this: that mostly the resister takes advantage of any difficulty of the Government in order to press his claim the harder, whereas Gandhi, when the Government was in any dangerous difficulty, always relaxed his resistance and of-

fered his help. In 1899 came the Boer War; Gandhi immediately organized an Indian Red Cross unit. There was a popular movement for refusing it and treating it as seditious. But it was needed. The soldiers wanted it. And it served through the war, and was mentioned in despatches, and thanked publicly for its skilful work and courage under fire. In 1904 there was an outbreak of plague in Johannesburg, and Gandhi had a private hospital opened before the public authorities had begun to act. In 1906 there was a Native rebellion in Natal: Gandhi raised and personally led a corps of stretcher-bearers, whose work seems to have proved particularly dangerous and painful. Gandhi was thanked by the Governor in Natal — and shortly afterwards thrown into jail in Johannesburg. Lastly, in 1913, when he was being repeatedly imprisoned, among criminals of the lowest class, and his followers were in jail to the number of 2,500, in the very midst of the general strike of Indians in the Transvaal and Natal there occurred the sudden and revolutionary railway strike which endangered for the time the very existence of organized society in South Africa. From the ordinary agitator's point of view the game was in Gandhi's hands. He had only to strike his hardest. Instead, he gave orders for his people to resume work till the Government should be safe again. I cannot say how often he was imprisoned, how often mobbed and assaulted, or what pains were taken to mortify and humiliate him in public. But by 1913 the Indian case had been taken up by Lord Hardinge and the Government of India. An Imperial Commission reported in his favour on most of the points at issue, and an Act was passed according to the Commission's recommendations, entitled the Indian Relief Act.

My sketch is very imperfect; but the story forms an extraordinary illustration of a contest which was won, or practically won, by a policy of doing no wrong, committing

no violence, but simply enduring all the punishment the other side could inflict until they became weary and ashamed of punishing. A battle of the unaided human soul against overwhelming material force, and it ends by the units of material force gradually deserting their own banners and coming round to the side of the soul!

Persons in power should be very careful how they deal with a man who cares nothing for sensual pleasure, nothing for riches, nothing for comfort or praise or promotion, but is simply determined to do what he believes to be right. He is a dangerous and uncomfortable enemy — because his body, which you can always conquer, gives you so little purchase upon his soul.

VI

In Gandhi's case the solution of the strife between him and the Government was particularly difficult, because he was not content to be let alone. He thought it his duty, God helping him, to compel a Government backed by the vast majority of the nation to change their policy. And no Government could yield, or ought to yield, to such coercion. The best it could do was probably somewhere near that which, by the advice of General Smuts, it eventually did propose to do: to purge its policy as far as possible of all elements which were not essential to its own conviction and which did particular violence to the convictions of others.

In the next case I wish to lay before you the issue is much simpler. It is the case of the persecution of an Englishman of saintly life, Mr. Stephen Hobhouse. I say deliberately of saintly life, and I say no more; not for a moment that his views are right, or his theory of life socially convenient, or his example one that should be followed. As we have noticed before, it often happens that the saints are wrong

and the children of this world right; but they are not often right when they begin treating the saints as criminals.

Stephen Hobhouse was the son of rich parents; he was a scholar of Eton, afterwards an undergraduate at Balliol; he won First Class Honors in Moderations, and Second Class Honors in Greats, after which he obtained a post in the Board of Education. He was rich and well connected; he was clever and successful, and had every prospect of a brilliant career. But from early life he had a conscience more exacting than the consciences of most of us. He was religious with a touch of mysticism. He wanted to follow Christ. He eventually formulated the goal at which he aimed as " self-identification with the oppressed." To help the poor and suffering was not enough; he must be one with the poor and suffering. He could not do this as a rich man. So he began by renouncing his position as heir to his father's estate and stripping himself of the prospect of inherited wealth. He had already joined the Quakers, and was an occasional speaker in their meeting-house. (They have no ordained ministers.) He went with his wife, who shares his religion, to a workman's flat in East London, where the two continued to live as friends and neighbours to all about them, ministering to those in need and seeking " self-identification with the oppressed." Their life, I need hardly say, was reduced to the most drastic simplicity. Let me give one small illustration.

A friend of mine calling on Mrs. Hobhouse the other day noticed a clothes-line hanging across the room and asked some question about it. It appeared that when they first moved into the flat, living of course without a servant, Mrs. Hobhouse sent her washing out to a laundry. The work of suddenly living without a servant was, for two delicately nurtured people, hard enough. But they noticed that the families living round them did not send their washing out;

they did it at home in the living-room. "Self-identification with the oppressed" pointed the road clearly, and they tied the clothes-line across the living-room and did the washing at home.

Stephen had adopted the Tolstoyan view of war when he was an undergraduate at Oxford and resigned from the volunteers. He had been a Quaker, and a Quaker of the strictest sort, for five years before 1914. He knew by experience what war was; for during the war in the Balkans, having previously resigned his post in the Board of Education, he had gone to Constantinople to nurse the refugees of various nations who were lying, largely untended, in the mosques and outlying cemeteries of the city. Of his work there I know only by hearsay, but the stories of it have a certain unmistakable note. Creeds and religious organizations clash against one another; but true saintliness, the quality of the soul that has really mastered the corpse it carries, is much the same in all religions, and breaks the barriers of creeds. Stephen's interpreter, a pious Moslem, who was accustomed probably to think of all Christians as dogs, felt the spirit that radiated from this Christian. He joined him in prayer, and consented at a time of danger to give up the revolver he was carrying.

The present war came and was followed by conscription, embodied in an Act which allowed complete exemption to those who on conscientious grounds, however mistaken, refused to take part in slaying their fellow-men. If conscription was necessary, as I am inclined to think it was, that was a generous Act, and one worthy of the traditions of English tolerance. It was well known that Stephen, as a strict Quaker, considered it a sin to partake in war, and there was not the smallest glimmer of a doubt to be cast on the sincerity of his objection.

By an act of angry and uncomprehending injustice his

tribunal disallowed his conscientious objection and sent him to serve with the Friends' Ambulance Unit. This order he could not accept on two grounds: the Unit was now auxiliary to the Army, so that even as a free agent he would not have joined it; and in any case he would not accept an order that made him a conscript. He did not appeal against the sentence, because many of his friends and fellow-Quakers were already being sent to prison, and "self-identification with the oppressed" forbade his deserting them. He refused to obey military orders. He was court-martialled and sentenced to various military punishments, culminating in 112 days' hard labour. When that was over he was taken out and the order repeated; of course he still disobeyed, and is now * undergoing two years' hard labour. The renewed sentences bring with them conditions more severe than those of continuous penal servitude.

And one point more. Every one interested in prison reform knows that one of the most severe strains upon human nature involved in prison life is the eternal silence — one of the most severe and, many people hold, the most corrupting and injurious to mind and character next to solitary confinement itself. In every prison the rule of silence is apt to be somehow evaded. It is a thing which human nature in the long run will not bear, and by hook or by crook, by sundry unedifying artifices, the prisoners do manage to snatch a few words of conversation with one another from day to day. Stephen at first did talk by these secret methods, then he decided that it was wrong. He writes to his wife: "The very night of your last visit I was smitten with a sense of shame for the habits of concealment verging on deception which this life seems to force on all of us. For a fortnight I wrestled day and night with this feeling. . . . It seemed so hard to give up the only outward ways of expressing love."

* August 1918.

He confessed to the governor that he had been breaking the rule of silence, and refused to promise to obey it in the future. And the result is that, in order to make sure he does not break that rule, and at the same time to avoid the constant repetition of special punishments, this man is in solitary confinement for the indefinite future.

I believe in this case that the Government has broken the law. I am clear that the original sentence of the tribunal was wrong. But for the moment I am dealing with another aspect of this case. Apart from the rightness or wrongness of the prisoner's views about war, apart from the technical legality or illegality of the Government's action, you have here a deliberate conflict between the massed power of Government and the soul of one righteous man. There are about a thousand men in the same position.

I do not know who will win. I make no prophecy. It is quite easy for a huge engine like the War Office to crush any one man's body, to destroy his reason by perpetual solitude, or put an end to his life. But I do not think that a Government which sets out to prosecute its saints is a wise or a generous Government; I do not think a nation which cannot live in peace with its saints is a very healthy or high-minded nation.*

VII

I have not attempted to answer the question with which we started, to define what the soul is or what life is, or where the difference comes between the mere physical life that makes a man move his limbs and desire his food, and the soul itself or central guiding principle, which the ancients called reason and the moderns think of as will. The question is perhaps still beyond human powers of analysis. I have only tried to consider with the help of examples the actual work-

* Stephen Hobhouse was unconditionally released soon after this.

ing of the soul in shaping a man's life, and sometimes bringing him into conflict not only with his own apparent interest, but with the general stream of will in the society around him. And I have tried, first, to suggest that a wise ruler will be very circumspect, a conscientious ruler will be very tender, before challenging the lowliest of human souls to battle on the soul's own ground, or setting about the task of compelling the humblest of his subjects by torment and violence to do that which he definitely believes to be wrong. So much for action between man and man. And secondly, within our own hearts, I would say that the main lesson to each man of us is to see that his own soul does not die. It will sometimes stagger under the weight of the corpse it carries; that is inevitable. Only let it not fall into the power of the corpse. The weight of dead matter seems, at times like the present, to increase upon us. Our whole being is dulled. We do more and more things because we are driven, fewer and fewer because we choose them and love them; we cease even to suffer as we should suffer, or to pity as we should pity. In our own great war we tend to forget what we ourselves owe to the higher causes for which our friends have died as martyrs, to forget because the deaths are by now so common and the martyrdom has lasted so long. We tend to shrink from the higher emotions because they are difficult, to sink into the round of lower and more commonplace emotions because they make less disturbance in our daily business. The power of death is abroad over the world. It has taken lives innumerable, and better lives than ours. Let those of us whose bodily life is still spared make sure that the soul within us shall not die.

HERMES THE INTERPRETER

GEORGE SANTAYANA

George Santayana, of mixed Spanish and American parentage, may by virtue of his long connection with Harvard as student and professor of philosophy be treated among American writers, though he has withdrawn from this country and now lives in Europe. He is the author of one of the most significant philosophical works produced in America, *The Life of Reason,* and his characteristic views are also embodied in a number of volumes of critical and informal essays. Mr. Santayana's philosophy is grounded in an acceptance of the reality of the external world but his interest is in the mind of man and in its capacity for finding beauty and meaning in the nature which environs it. His philosophy is remarkable for recognizing the place occupied in life by dreams, imagination, poetry. He defines the life of reason as "simply the dreaming mind becoming coherent, devising symbols and methods, such as languages, by which it may fitly survey its own career, and the forces of nature on which that career depends." His attitude is detached, remote, Olympian, and "Hermes the Interpreter" is its true symbolic embodiment. Hermes views the activities of all men, whether philosophers or gutter-snipes, with an aloofness in which amusement blends with a certain tenderness and pity, and he embraces Maia, who is no other than Illusion, knowing her for what she is. In morality Mr. Santayana calls himself a pagan and a skeptic, summing up his notion of the good life in these tolerant terms: "I wish individuals, and races, and nations to be themselves, and to multiply the forms of perfection and happiness, as nature prompts them. The only thing which I think might be propagated without injustice to the types thereby suppressed is harmony; enough harmony to prevent the interference of one type with another, and to allow the perfect development of each type. The good, as I conceive it, is happiness, happiness for each man after

his own heart, and for each hour according to its inspiration." This is a tolerance which may savor a little of indifference, but warmth and intimacy are not qualities to be sought in Mr. Santayana. What we do find in him is clear intellect joined with a poetic appreciation of experience, an imagination subtle, brooding, and rarefied, a style symbolic, allusive, compact, and rich in overtones. His irony, tinged with the suave disdain of the superior man who is conscious of his superiority, lends emphasis to his aloof and aristocratic temper. (*Hermes the Interpreter* appeared in *The London Mercury*, February, 1922, and was reprinted in *Soliloquies in England and Other Soliloquies*, 1922.)

HERMES THE INTERPRETER *

A TRAVELLER should be devout to Hermes, and I have always loved him above the other gods for that charming union which is found in him of youth with experience, alacrity with prudence, modesty with laughter, and a ready tongue with a sound heart. In him the first bubblings of mockery subside at once into courtesy and helpfulness. He is the winged Figaro of Olympus, willing to yield to others in station and to pretend to serve them, but really wiser and happier than any of them. There is a certain roguery in him, and the habit of winking at mischief. He has a great gift for dissertation, and his abundant eloquence, always unimpeachable in form and in point, does not hug the truth so closely as pious people might expect in a god who, as they say sagaciously, can have no motive for lying. But gods do not need motives. The lies of Hermes are jests; they represent things as they might have been, and serve to show what a strange accident the truth is. The reproach which Virgil addresses to his Juno, "Such malignity in minds celestial?" could never apply to this amiable divinity, who, if he is a rascal at all (which I do not admit), is a disinterested rascal. He has given no pawns to fortune, he is not a householder, he is not pledged against his will to any cause. Homer tells us that Hermes was a thief; but the beauty of mythology is that every poet can recast it according to his own insight and sense of propriety; as, in fact, our solemn theologians do also, although they pretend that their

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theology is a science, and are not wide awake enough to notice the dreamful, dramatic impulse which leads them to construct it. Now, in my vision, the thievery of Hermes, and the fact that he was the patron of robbers, merchants, rhetoricians, and liars, far from being unworthy of his divine nature, are a superb and humorous expression of it. He did not steal the cattle of Apollo for profit. Apollo himself — a most exquisite young god — did not give a fig for his cattle nor for his rustic employment; in adopting it he was doing a kind turn to a friend, or had a love-lorn scheme or a wager afoot, or merely wished for the moment to be idyllic. It was a pleasant *scherzo* (after the *andante* which he played in the heavens, in his capacity of sun-god and inspirer of all prophets) to lean gracefully here on his herdsman's staff, or to lie under a tuft of trees on some mossy hillock, in the midst of his pasturing kine, and to hold the poor peeping dryads spellbound by the operatic marvels of his singing. In purloining those oxen, Hermes, who was a very little boy at the time, simply wanted to mock these affectations of his long-haired elder brother; and Apollo, truly an enraptured artist and not a prig, and invulnerable like Hermes in his godlike freedom, did not in the least mind the practical joke, nor the ridicule, but was the first to join in the laugh.

When Hermes consents to be the patron of thieves and money-lenders it is in the same spirit. Standing, purse in hand, in his little shrine above their dens, he smiles as if to remind them that everything is trash which mortals can snatch from one another by thieving or bargaining, and that the purpose of all their voyages, and fairs, and highway robberies is a bauble, such as the dirty children playing in the street set up as a counter in their game. But Hermes is not impatient even of the gutter-snipes, with their cries and their shrill quarrels. He laughs at their grimaces; their jests do not seem emptier to him than those of their elders;

he is not offended at their rags, but sends sleep to them as they lie huddled under some archway or stretched in the sun upon the temple steps. He presides no less benignly over thieves' kitchens and over the shipyards and counting-houses of traders; not that he cares at all who makes the profit or who hoards the treasure, but that sagacity and the hum of business are delightful to him in themselves. He likes to cull the passion and sparkle out of the most sordid life, and the confused rumble of civilization is pleasant to his senses, like a sweet vapour rising from the evening sacrifice.

His admirable temper and mastery of soul appear in nothing more clearly than in his love-affair with the beautiful Maia. She is ill-spoken of, but he is very, very fond of her, and deeply happy in her love. It is a secret relation, although everybody has heard of it; but the nymph is a mystery; in fact, although everybody has seen her at one time or another, no one has ever known then that it was she. Hermes alone recognizes and loves her in her own person, and calls her by her name; but privately. Sometimes, with that indiscretion and over-familiarity which the young allow themselves in their cups, his brothers ask him where he meets her; and he only smiles a little and is silent. She is said to be a wild unmanageable being, half mænad and half shrew; a waif always appearing and disappearing without any reason, and in her fitful temper at once exacting and tedious. Her eyes are sometimes blue and sometimes black, like heaven. Empty-headed and too gay, some people think her; but others understand that she is constitutionally melancholy and quite mad. They say she often sits alone, hardly distinguishable in the speckled sunshine of the forest, or else by the sea, spreading her hair to the wind and moaning: and then Hermes flies to her and comforts her, for she is an exile everywhere and he is everywhere at home. It is rumoured that in the East she has had a great position, and has been

Queen of the Universe; but in Europe she has no settled metaphysical status, and it is not known whether she is really a goddess, mistress over herself, or only a fay or a phantom at other people's beck and call; and she has nowhere any temple or rustic sanctuary or respectable oracle. Moreover, she has inexpressibly shocked the virtuous, who think so much of genealogy, by saying, as is reported, that she has no idea who is the father of her children. Hermes laughs merrily at this, calling it one of her harmless sallies, which she indulges in simply because they occur to her, and because she likes to show her independence and to flout the sober censors of this world. He is perfectly confident she has never had any wooer but himself, nor would dream of accepting any other. Even with him she is always reverting to stubborn refusals and denials and calling him names; but when the spitfire is raging most angrily, he has only to gaze at her steadily and throw his arm gaily about her, as much as to say, "Don't be a fool," for her to be instantly mollified and confess that it was all make-believe, but that she couldn't help it. Then it is wonderful how reasonable she becomes, how perfectly trustful and frank, so that no companion could be more deeply delightful. She is as light as a feather, then, in his arms. The truth is, she lives only for him; she really has no children, only young sisters who are also more or less in love with him and he with them; and she sleeps her whole life long in his absence. In all those strange doings and wanderings reported of her she is only walking in her sleep. The approach of Hermes awakes her and lends her life — the only life she has. Her true name is Illusion; and it is very characteristic of him, so rich in pity, merriment, and shrewdness, to have chosen this poor child, Illusion, for his love.

Hermes is the great interpreter, the master of riddles. I should not honor him for his skill in riddles if I thought he

invented them wantonly, because he liked to puzzle himself with them, or to reduce other people to a foolish perplexity without cause. I hate enigmas; and if I believed that Hermes was the inspirer of those odious persons who are always asking conundrums and making puns I should renounce him altogether, break his statue, turn his picture to the wall, and devote myself exclusively to the cult of some sylvan deity, all silence and simple light. But I am sure Hermes loves riddles only because they are no riddles to him; he is never caught in the tangle, and he laughs to see how unnecessarily poor opinionated mortals befool themselves, wilfully following any devious scent once they are on it by chance, and missing the obvious for ever. He gives them what sly hints he can to break the spell of their blindness; but they are so wedded to their false preconceptions that they do not understand him, and are only the more perplexed. Sometimes, however, they take the hint, their wit grows nimble, their thoughts catch fire, and insight, solving every idle riddle, harmonizes the jarring cords of the mind.

The wand of Hermes has serpents wound about it, but is capped with wings, so that at its touch the sting and the coil of care may vanish, and that we may be freed from torpor and dull enchantment, and may see, as the god does, how foolish we are. All these mysteries that befog us are not mysteries really; they are the mother-tongue of nature. Rustics, and also philosophers, think that any language but theirs is gibberish; they are sorry for the stranger who can speak only an unintelligible language, and are sure he will be damned unless the truth is preached to him speedily by some impertinent missionary from their own country. They even argue with nature, trying to convince her that she cannot move, or cannot think, or cannot have more dimensions than those of their understanding. Oh for a touch of the healing wand of Hermes the Interpreter, that we might un-

derstand the language of the birds and the stars, and, laughing first at what they say of us, might then see our image in the mirror of infinity, and laugh at ourselves! Here is a kindly god indeed, humane though superhuman, friendly though inviolate, who does not preach, who does not threaten, who does not lay new, absurd, or morose commands on our befuddled souls, but who unravels, who relieves, who shows us the innocence of the things we hated and the clearness of the things we frowned on or denied. He interprets us to the gods, and they accept us; he interprets us to one another, and we perceive that the foreigner, too, spoke a plain language: happy he if he was wise in his own tongue. It is for the divine herald alone to catch the meaning of all, without subduing his merry voice to any dialect of mortals. He mocks our stammerings and forgives them; and when we say anything to the purpose, and reach any goal which, however wantonly, we had proposed to ourselves, he applauds and immensely enjoys our little achievement; for it is inspired by him and like his own. May he be my guide: and not in this world only, in which the way before me seems to descend gently, quite straight and clear, towards an unruffled sea; but at the frontiers of eternity let him receive my spirit, reconciling it, by his gracious greeting, to what had been its destiny. For he is the friend of the shades also, and makes the greatest interpretation of all, that of life into truth, translating the swift words of time into the painted language of eternity. That is for the dead; but for living men, whose feet must move forward whilst their eyes see only backward, he interprets the past to the future, for its guidance and ornament. Often, too, he bears news to his father and brothers in Olympus, concerning any joyful or beautiful thing that is done on earth, lest they should despise or forget it. In that fair inventory and chronicle of happiness let my love of him be remembered.

OF COMFORT

HENRY W. NEVINSON

Mr. Nevinson, who faces life in the spirit of bold adventure, is a chivalrous fighter for liberal causes. In his profession of newspaper correspondent he has always gone where the danger was greatest. He has been through a number of wars and not a few revolutions, but his experiences have not dulled his ardor and the defeat of many hopes has not weakened his faith in the ultimate victory of free men and liberal institutions. In the tradition of the familiar essay he belongs with those who have an earnest moral feeling to communicate but have the gift of doing it with a disarming indirectness. His blitheness of spirit and the athletic quality of his character give a soldierly grace to his admonitions. (*Of Comfort* appeared in the (London) *Nation*, September 18, 1920. It was reprinted, with a few verbal changes, in *Modern English Essays, 1870–1920*. Edited by Ernest Rhys.)

OF COMFORT *

IT is a queer word, that "Comfort." It appears to have come down in the world. We suppose from the look of it that once it meant something that added strength or courage or fortitude, and the original meaning is seen in the old Statute of Treasons, which defines treason as "comforting the king's enemies." Fairly early it came to imply a mental consolation or solace, as we see in the words, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people," and "Rachel mourning for her children, and would not be comforted." Then there is the proverb about Job's Comforters, and we have known "cold comfort," which meant much the same as the consolation given to Job. That high or spiritual meaning still persists. One hears an old woman sometimes saying that her son, or even her husband, is a "great comfort" to her, and the poet writes of "comfort scorned of devils." But in its commonest use the word has degenerated. When we speak of comfort, we generally think of an easy, warm, and restful state of body or bodily surroundings. We mean "creature comforts," implying pleasant furniture and plenty to eat. When we say that a family is "in comfortable circumstances," we mean that life is pretty easy for it. A "comfortable person" is easy-going and inclined to be stout. A "comforter" has so little reference to Job that it has become a woollen scarf.

There is something peculiarly English about the word. Though a French hotel may advertise *Comforts du premier ordre,* all foreigners recognize the English claim. A few years ago there was a fairly well-to-do Athenian who was

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far from content with the illustrious glories of his city. In vain the Acropolis revealed to him by day and night the noblest monuments of architecture. In vain Lycabettus rose in pellucid air, and the bay of Salamis glowed like amethyst, and purple Hymettus hummed with all its bees. No history, art, or nature could soothe his restless soul. For he had been in England, and "Nothing," he cried, "nothing on earth makes life worth living but solid English comfort!" England's solid comfort had given him a glimpse of an earthly Paradise, and in his own City of the Violet Crown he mourned uncomforted. One remembers how the Yorkshire servant who accompanied Kinglake upon his journey through Servia and Bulgaria, then almost as desolate under Turkish rule as now under Christian atrocities, "rode doggedly on in his pantry jacket, looking out for 'gentlemen's seats.'" It was for the English comfort of gentlemen's seats that the poor fellow was looking, unable to imagine a country so god-forsaken as to be without it. Similarly, I have known a wealthy travelling Englishman regretfully informing his Turkish host that in England we always have marmalade for breakfast. And two English ladies, compassionately eager to give relief to distressed Albania, wrote to inquire whether the railways were comfortable there and the lavatories clean; and the only possible answer was that in Albania there are neither railways nor lavatories.

That solid English comfort, how pleasingly fond memory paints it! The large and airy bedrooms with dark blinds, the early tea brought in by the white-aproned maid, the hot shaving-water and cleaned boots, the large washing-basins, the white porcelain bath, the copious breakfast with coffee or tea and choice of varied flesh, fowl, and eggs upon the sideboard, the smoking-room with deep armchairs and a mingled savor of cigars and peaty tweeds, the healthy and appetizing exercise with horse or fishing-rod or gun, the co-

pious lunch, which perhaps appeared by the butler's magic in the woods, the bland hours of afternoon, just pleasantly stirred by the clink of tea-cups, the leisurely converse upon animals and birds and fishes, hardly interrupted by the copious dinner, and continued till whisky-and-soda with sandwiches announced the approach of welcome bedtime. Or (not to leave out the intellectual stimulus so essential for complete well-being) the perusal of the *Times* and the sporting papers in the morning, the large library with card-tables, the rows of well-bound books with readable titles, the occasional references to politics and the ruin of the country, and perhaps a walk to church with the ladies on Sunday, to encourage the poor and listen in somnolent peace to the voices of vicar and choir-boys among the ancient arches. What other land has ever incubated a life of such comfort as that? The disgruntled satirist may sniff at " Heartbreak House " and " Horseback Hall." Never mind! No country but ours has evolved such solidity of comfort, and the further the comfort withdraws into the abysm of time the more we dwell upon it with poignant regret. Rhoda Broughton was no more gourmand than the rest of us, yet with what pathos, in old age, in her posthumous novel, she laments the passing of once familiar joys: —

" The unbidden tears rise to my eyes," she writes, " as I look back upon the fat breasts of those Aylesbury ducks across the desert of the late lean years. Then they were commonplaces of daily life, and did not even provoke an admiring ejaculation, any more than did their handmaids, the exquisite marrowfat peas in their tender juvenility."

It is true there are various standards of comfort, differing chiefly according to income. Some find comfort in a Kensington flat or maisonette; some in the ignobly decent monotony of a suburban street. Some are content when they have attained to a best parlor, where books lie upon the

table like spokes in a wheel and the india-rubber plant in the window sheds an almost religious shade. We remember what pride filled old Clayhanger's heart when at last he won for himself a dwelling whose front door opened into a passage instead of a room. The " working people " (the average men and women of every country) cling to their " bits of things " as evidences of respectability and realities of comfort, and grudgingly part with them to the pawnshop when times are hard. It is made a bitter reproach to them if they purchase fur coats and jewelry or even clothe the children well, when times are good; yet, within their narrow limits, they are only imitating the ideal of necessary comfort held by their " betters," who certainly are not working people. Comfort is largely a matter of comparison. All who were out upon any fighting front during the war know how comfortable, how luxurious even, the ordinary things of life appeared to them on their return — the real bread-and-butter, the tablecloth, the plentiful soap-and-water, the bed with sheets. Even after a journey to foreign parts, Catullus knew that feeling of unaccustomed but familiar peace: —

" Oh, what is more blessed than release from anxieties? " he wrote; " when the soul lays aside its burden, and wearied with exertions abroad we reach our own hearth and settle snugly down in the bed we have so pined for."

It is largely a matter of comparison, but the trouble is that when they have become accustomed to one degree of comfort, people are very unwilling to descend to another. We can imagine that some would miss the tea brought up to the bedside, some the marmalade for breakfast, some the Aylesbury ducklings, some the deep armchairs, some the porcelain bath, some the aproned maid, some the *Times*, some the india-rubber plant. The German nobleman thinks it hard to remove from his ancestral Schloss into a desirable villa residence. The Russian Grand Duke is dissatisfied with a

workman's food and clothing, even though the Soviet workman's standard of life may have advanced. The learned Professor does not enjoy returning to the attic which seemed quite jolly when he was a student. Fear of losing comfort to which people are accustomed or have risen has an incalculable influence even upon our votes. It acts as a drag on politics, national and international. "Behold the bulwarks of the Constitution!" cries the comfortable man, restoring his confidence by a walk through suburban villas. Skin for skin, yea, all that other people have, will a man give for his comfort. He will also block the way to all that other people ought to have. For comfort is the life-breath of reaction, and that is why England has long been the most Conservative of countries, being the Daniel Lambert of nations, as George Meredith once called her.

But our Daniel Lambert is shrinking now, and the skin begins to hang loose about his opulent limbs. One need not consider only the rumors of strikes and revolutions and Bolshevism to know the change that is indubitably upon us. Read the news about the sales of great country houses and estates. Heartbreak House collapses; Horseback Hall fades like a vision. Profiteers, glutted like ghouls with noble blood, may flourish for the moment, but they too will shrink and fade. Already one sees the belted Earl wondering whether it is really necessary to his salvation to have a castle in the North, a mansion in the South, a house in Grosvenor Square, and a villa on the Mediterranean, involving so much perplexity in which of them to live. Already great town mansions are splitting into flats, fissiparous as jelly-fish. Already our country gentry are taking paying guests and teaching them what English comfort was. The shrinkage proceeds downwards right through all the comfortable classes — down through the "people of independent means" to the hard-working professional men and women. "Beautiful

it is," cried Carlyle two generations ago, "to see the idol of old Mammon cracking in all directions!" The idol was patched up for a time, but now it cracks still more visibly, and we do not deny it is a beautiful sight. But a lot of comfort goes with it, and the loss does not look so beautiful.

What, then, shall we do? With the pound note valued at something over ten shillings, we have become a poor country instead of being a rich, and we must adapt ourselves to the change. At what we should properly call the worst, each plane of the comfortable classes must come down a degree or two in comfort, the castle living at the standard of the villa, and so on down the scale of wealth and shrinkage. At what, we suppose, we ought to call the best, there will be a general rise in the degrees of comfort for the average men and women who work daily for wages, and a proportional fall for the comfortable classes, the severity of the fall varying directly with the distance. That Earl's fall, for instance, right down to the level of comfort "in widest commonalty spread," will be like Mulciber's when he fell sheer over the crystal battlements of heaven and landed on barren Lemnos Isle. But to the humble journalist the jolt or bump will hardly be perceptible. In any case, we have encouraging examples. How pleasant it is to read of those American Indians who burnt all their furniture and other possessions once a year and started fresh and clean! And let us recall the list of comforts that Thoreau took with him to the woods — a list that sounds almost superfluously long: —

"A bed, a table, a desk, three chairs, a looking-glass three inches in diameter, a pair of tongs and andirons, a kettle, a skillet, a frying-pan, a dipper, a wash-bowl, two knives and forks, one cup, one spoon, a jug for oil, a jug for molasses, and a japanned lamp."

He added a book or two, but we think an Earl would find it quite possible to curtail that list in other ways as well.

The first thing for us to do, as the portentous change creeps upon us, is to restore the original meaning of that word "comfort." It has degenerated until it implies a certain amount of softness, torpor, and imbecility. We must restore it to its birthright as something contributing to strength, courage, or fortitude. Then, with the poet of America, we can cry: —

Not for delectations sweet,
Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and the studious,
Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame enjoyment!
Do the feasters gluttonous feast?
Do the corpulent sleepers sleep? have they locked and bolted the doors?
Still be ours the diet hard, and the blanket on the ground!

But one hopes that by that time those questions will be needless, for there will then be no gluttonous feasters, no corpulent sleepers, no locks and bolts, no doors, except to keep out the cold.

ON SPEAKING FRENCH

MAX BEERBOHM

Of all those who are writing informal essays in our day not one carries so clearly the stamp of permanence as does Max Beerbohm. He has the preservative quality of style in a higher degree than any English essayist since Lamb. A native elegance of mind, a fastidious taste, the kind of intelligence which the French call *esprit*, a perfect control of the most delicate shades of irony, and an exquisite sense of verbal nuance and modulation of phrase are some of the features which give him distinction among living writers. Though he began his career as "a dandy of letters," in his maturer work there is just the degree of real feeling and psychological insight to provide a body for his refined medium without overburdening it. (*On Speaking French* appeared in the *London Mercury*, October, 1920, and was reprinted in *And Even Now*, 1921.)

ON SPEAKING FRENCH *

WHEREVER two Englishmen are speaking French to a Frenchman you may safely diagnose in the breast of one of the two humiliation, envy, ill-will, impotent rage, and a dull yearning for vengeance; and you can take it that the degree of these emotions is in exact ratio to the superiority of the other man's performance. In the breast of this other are contempt, malicious amusement, conceit, vanity, pity, and joy in ostentation; these, also, exactly commensurable with his advantage. Strange and sad that this should be so; but so it is. French brings out the worst in all of us — all, I mean, but the few, the lamentably far too few, who cannot aspire to stammer some colloquial phrases of it.

Even in Victorian days, when England was more than geographically, was psychologically an island, French made mischief among us, and was one of the Devil's favourite ways of setting brother against brother. But in those days the bitterness of the weaker brother was a little sweetened with disapproval of the stronger. To speak French fluently and idiomatically and with a good accent — or with an idiom and accent which to other rough islanders *seemed* good — was a rather suspect accomplishment, being somehow deemed incompatible with civic worth. Thus the weaker ones had not to drain the last lees of their shame, and the stronger could not wholly rejoice in their strength. But the old saving prejudice has now died out (greatly to the delight of the Devil), and there seems no chance that it will be revived.

* From *And Even Now*. Copyright, by E. P. Dutton & Co. Reprinted by permission.

Of other languages no harm comes. None of us — none, at any rate, outside the diplomatic service — has a feeling that he ought to be master of them. In every recent generation a few men have learned Italian because of the Divina Commedia: and a very few others have tried Spanish, with a view to Cervantes; and German has pestered not always vainly the consciences of young men gravitating to philosophy or to science. But not for social, not for any oral purposes were these languages essayed. If an Italian or a Spaniard or a German came among us he was expected to converse in English or spend his time in visiting the sights silently and alone. No language except French has ever — but stay! There was, at the outbreak of the War, a great impulse towards Russian. All sorts of people wanted their children to be taught Russian without a moment's delay. I do not remember that they wanted to learn it themselves; but they felt an extreme need that their offspring should hereafter be able to converse with moujiks about ikons and the Little Father and anything else — if there were anything else — that moujiks cared about. This need, however, is not felt now. When, so soon after his début in high politics, M. Kerensky was superseded by M. Lenin, Russian was forthwith deemed a not quite nice language, even for children. Russia's alphabet was withdrawn from the nurseries as abruptly as it had been brought in, and le chapeau de la cousine du jardinier was re-indued with its old importance.

I doubt whether Russian would for more than a little while have seemed to be a likely rival of French, even if M. Kerensky had been the strong man we hoped he was. The language that succeeded to Latin as the official mode of intercourse between nations, and as the usual means of talk between the well-educated people of any one land and those of any other, had an initial advantage not quite counterbalanced by the fact that there are in Russia myriads of people

who speak Russian, and a few who can also read and write it. Russian may, for aught I know, be a very beautiful language; it may be as lucid and firm in its constructions as French is, and as musical in sound; I know nothing at all about it. Nor do I claim for French that it was by its own virtues predestined to the primacy that it holds in Europe. Had Italy, not France, been an united and powerful nation when Latin became desuete, that primacy would of course have been taken by Italian. And I cannot help wishing that this had happened. Italian, though less elegant, is, for the purpose of writing, a richer language than French, and an even subtler; and the sound of it spoken is as superior to the sound of French as a violin's is to a flute's. Still, French does, by reason of its exquisite concision and clarity, fill its post of honor very worthily, and will not in any near future, I think, be thrust down. Many people, having regard to the very numerous population of the British Empire and the United States, cherish a belief that English will presently be cock of the world's walk. But we have to consider that English is an immensely odd and irregular language, that it is accounted very difficult by even the best foreign linguists, and that even among native writers there are few who can so wield it as to make their meaning clear without prolixity — and among these few none who has not been well-grounded in Latin. By its very looseness, by its way of evoking rather than defining, suggesting rather than saying, English is a magnificent vehicle for emotional poetry. But foreigners don't much want to say beautiful haunting things to us; they want to be told what limits there are, if any, to the power of the Lord Mayor; and our rambling endeavours to explain do but bemuse and annoy them. They find that the rewards of learning English are as slight as its difficulties are great, and they warn their fellows to this effect. Nor does the oral sound of English allay the prejudice thus

created. Soothing and dear and charming that sound is to English ears. But no nation can judge the sound of its own language. This can be judged only from without, only by ears to which it is unfamiliar. And alas, much as we like listening to French or Italian, for example, Italians and Frenchmen (if we insist on having their opinion) will confess that English has for them a rather harsh sound. Altogether, it seems to me unlikely that the world will let English supplant French for international purposes, and likely that French will be ousted only when the world shall have been so internationalised that the children of every land will have to learn, besides their own traditional language, some kind of horrible universal lingo begotten on Volapuk by a congress of the world's worst pedants.

Almost I could wish I had been postponed to that era, so much have I suffered through speaking French to Frenchmen in the presence of Englishmen. Left alone with a Frenchman, I can stumble along, slowly indeed, but still along, and without acute sense of ignominy. Especially is this so if I am in France. There is in the atmosphere something that braces one for the language. I don't say I am not sorry, even so, for my Frenchman. But I am sorrier for him in England. And if any Englishmen be included in the scene my sympathy with him is like to be lost in my agony for myself.

Would that I had made some such confession years ago! O folly of pride! I liked the delusion that I spoke French well, a delusion common enough among those who had never heard me. Somehow I seemed likely to possess that accomplishment. I cannot charge myself with having ever claimed to possess it; but I am afraid that when any one said to me "I suppose you speak French perfectly?" I allowed the tone of my denial to carry with it a hint of mock-modesty. "Oh no," I would say, "my French is wretched," rather as though I meant that a member of the French Acad-

emy would detect lapses from pure classicism in it; or "No, no, mine is, French *pour rire,*" to imply that I was practically bilingual. Thus, during the years when I lived in London, I very often received letters from hostesses asking me to dine on the night when Mme. Chose or M. Tel was coming. And always I excused myself — *not* on the plea that I should be useless. This method of mine would have been well enough from any but the moral standpoint, had not Nemesis, taking her stand on that point, sometimes ordained that a Gaul should be sprung on me. It was not well with me then. It was downfall and disaster.

Strange, how one will trifle with even the most imminent doom. On being presented to the Gaul, I always hastened to say that I spoke his or her language only "un tout petit peu" — knowing well that this poor spark of slang would kindle within the breast of M. Tel or the bosom of Mme. Chose hopes that must so quickly be quenched in the puddle of my incompetence. I offer no excuse for so foolish a proceeding. I do but say that it is characteristic of all who are duffers at speaking a foreign tongue. Great is the pride they all take in airing some little bit of idiom. I recall, among many other pathetic exemplifiers of the foible, an elderly and rather eminent Greek, who, when I was introduced to him, said "I am jolly glad to meet you, Sir!" and, having said that, had nothing whatever else to say, and was moreover unable to grasp the meaning of anything said by *me,* though I said the simplest things, and said them very slowly and clearly. It is to my credit that in speaking English to a foreigner I do always try to be helpful. I bear witness against Mme. Chose and M. Tel that for me they have never made a like effort in their French. It is said that French people do not really speak faster than we, and that their seeming to do so is merely because of their lighter stress on syllables. If this is true, I wish that for my sake they would

stress their syllables a little more heavily. By their omission of this kindness I am so often baffled as to their meaning. To be shamed as a talker is bad enough; it is even worse to be shamed in the humble refuge of listener. To listen and from time to time murmur " C'est vrai " may seem safe enough; yet there is danger even here. I wish I could forget a certain luncheon in the course of which Mme. Chose (that brilliant woman) leaned suddenly across the table to me, and, with great animation, amidst a general hush, launched at me a particularly swift flight of winged words. With pensively narrowed eyes, I uttered my formula when she ceased. This formula she repeated, in a tone even more pensive than mine. " Mais je ne le connais pas," she then loudly exclaimed, " Je ne connais pas même le nom. Dites-moi de ce jeune homme." She had, as it presently turned out, been asking me which of the younger French novelists was most highly thought of by English critics; so that her surprise at never having heard of the gifted young Sévré was natural enough.

We all — but no, I must not say that we all have painful memories of this kind. Some of us can understand every word that flies from the lips of Mme. Chose or from the mouth of M. Tel. Some of us can also talk quickly and well to either of these pilgrims; and others can do the trick passably. But the duffers are in a great grim majority; and the mischief that French causes among us is mainly manifest, not (I would say) by weaker brethren hating the stronger, but by weak ones hating the less weak.

As French is a subject on which we all feel so keenly, a point of honor on which we are all so sensitive, how comes it that our general achievement is so slight? There was no lack of hopes, of plans, that we should excel. In many cases Time was taken for us by the forelock, and a French nurse installed. But alas! little children are wax to receive *and*

to retain. They will be charmingly fluent speakers of French within six weeks of Mariette's arrival, and will have forgotten every word of it within as brief an interval after her departure. Later, their minds become more retentive, though less absorbent; and then, by all means, let French be taught. Taught it is. At the school where I was reared there were four French masters; four; but to what purpose? Their class-rooms were scenes of eternal and incredible pandemonium, filled with whoops and cat-calls, with devil's tattoos on desks, and shrill inquiries for the exact date of the battle of Waterloo. Nor was the lot of those four men exceptional in its horror. From the accounts given to me by " old boys " of other schools I have gathered that it was the common lot of French masters on our shores; and I have often wondered how much of the Anglophobia recurrent among Frenchmen in the nineteenth century was due to the grisly tales told by those of them who had returned from our seminaries to die on their own soil. Since 1914, doubtless, French masters have had a very good time in England. But, even so, I doubt whether they have been achieving much in the way of tutelage. With the best will in the world, a boy will profit but little by three or four lessons a week (which are the utmost that our system allows him). What he wants, or at any rate will want, is to be able to cope with Mme. Chose. A smattering of the irregular verbs will not much avail him in that emprise. Not in the dark by-ways of conjugation, but on the sunny field of frank social intercourse, must he prove his knighthood. I would recommend that every boy, on reaching the age of sixteen, should be hurled across the Channel into the midst of some French family and kept there for six months. At the end of that time let him be returned to his school, there to make up for lost time. Time well lost, though: for the boy will have become fluent in French, and will ever remain so.

Fluency is all. If the boy has a good ear, he will speak with a good accent; but his accent is a point about which really he needn't care a jot. So is his syntax. Not with these will he win the heart of Mme. Chose, not with these the esteem of M. Tel, not with these anything but a more acrid rancour in the silly hostility of his competitors. If a foreigner speaks English to us easily and quickly, we demand no more of him; we are satisfied, we are delighted, and any mistakes of grammar or pronunciation do but increase the charm, investing with more than its intrinsic quality any good thing said — making us marvel at it and exchange fatuous glances over it, as we do when a little child says something sensible. But heaven protect us from the foreigner who pauses, searches, fumbles, revises, comes to standstills, has recourse to dumb-show! Away with him, by the first train to Dover! And this, we may be sure, is the very train M. Tel and Mme. Chose would like to catch whenever they meet me — or you?

A CRITICAL CREDO

MIDDLETON MURRY

In this closely written article Mr. Middleton Murry, who belongs to the younger school of English critics, makes a pointed statement of the function of criticism. Against a not uncommon tendency to view it as a kind of useless or even destructive parasite upon forms of literature that are regarded as, by distinction, "creative," he asserts the dignity and self-sufficiency of criticism as an art. Its importance, he maintains, is that like other artistic forms it expresses the personality and the reasoned vision of the writer and has the power of interesting its readers quite apart from the work which it discusses. Mr. Murry's formula for a good piece of criticism may be compared with what Mr. Robert Lynd says in his essay on *Book Reviewing*. (*A Critical Credo* appeared in *The New Republic*, October 26, 1921, and was reprinted in *Countries of the Mind*, 1922).

A CRITICAL CREDO

IT is a waste and weary labour to open up again the old question of reviewing and criticism. On the one hand, there should be no distinction between them; the reviewer's business is to criticise the book before him. But too often in practice the reviewer is expected to compile a library list for the average unintelligent reader. On the other hand, economic necessity nowadays compels the critic to become a reviewer. So that the valuable modern distinction is not so much the distinction between the critic and the reviewer, as the impossibilists frequently urge, as that between the critic-reviewer and the puff-reviewer. We must leave out the puff-reviewer. God will reward him as surely as his employer does.

Speaking of criticism, Remy de Gourmont said that " the whole effort of a sincere man was to erect his personal impressions into laws." That is the motto of a true criticism, conscious of its limitations and its strength. The emphasis falls even more decidedly upon the law-making than upon the personal basis of the impressions, for that is inevitable. The man who is content to record his own impressions, without making an effort to stabilise them in the form of laws, whatever he is, is not a critic. A law or rule, or rather a system of laws or rules, is necessary to the critic; it is a record of all his past impressions and reactions; but it must be his own law, his own system, refined by his own effort out of his own experience. Otherwise he is a pedant and not a critic.

The function of criticism is, therefore, primarily the func-

tion of literature itself, to provide a means of self-expression for the critic. He begins like any other writer, with the conviction (which may of course be an illusion) that his views and conclusions on the subject-matter which is literature are of importance in themselves and to others; and he proceeds to promulgate and propagate them. Like any other writer, he stands or falls in the long run, by the closer or more remote approximation of his views to the common experience of that comparatively small fraction of the human race which itself comes to conclusions about life and literature, which is the concentrated record of life. As Dr. Johnson said: —

" Nothing can please many and please long, but just representations of human nature. Particular manners can be known to few, and therefore few only can judge how nearly they are copied. The irregular combinations of fanciful invention may delight awhile, by that novelty of which the common satiety of life sends us all in quest; but the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted, and the mind can repose only on the stability of truth."

The critic stands or falls by the stability of his truth, and necessarily by his skill in communicating his truth.

That the critic has to interest his readers is true, but in exactly the same sense as it is true that every writer has to interest his readers. He does not have to aim at being more interesting than other writers. This is one of the prime heresies of modern criticism. Its adherents appear to hold that a critical article is a kind of knockabout turn. Unless the critic is turning a somersault or making a grimace in every sentence, he is dull. Another, and more persuasive heresy is that it is the critic's business to make the best of a bad book by picking out the one or two plums that have

wandered into the wilderness of dough. A critic, argue its adherents, has to communicate " gusto " to his readers, no matter what book he may be writing about. These seem to me to be pure heresies, and the critics who embrace them will surely be forgotten.

Criticism is a particular art of literature. It is possible not to like the art, and possible for the critic to regret that his art is not liked. But it is not, or ought not to be possible for a critic to play the traitor to his art in order to get a bigger audience for his raree-show. Because a sculptor knows that sculpture is not popular, he does not paint moustaches on his figures or plant billycock hats on the top of their heads. The critic's business is to express himself by expressing his opinion on the work of literature before him. He has therefore to make sure that his opinion is his true opinion; he has to safeguard himself against accidental and temporary disturbances of his sensibility. Hence the need for a system of principles, refined out of his more constant reactions, to control momentary enthusiasms and passing disgusts.

Moreover, he is concerned to elucidate the significance of the work before him, for his verdict is a verdict as to significance. A work of literature may possess significance of various kinds; it may have historical, ethical, or æsthetic significance; that is, it may have importance at a particular phase of the human consciousness, or it may be valuable as expressing a particular attitude towards human life, or it may have more or less of a certain kind of artistic perfection which compels a peculiar artistic emotion in the reader. A work may have significance of one of these kinds, or all of them, or any combination of them. A critic is bound to have a predisposition towards one of these kinds of significance; he will be predominantly a historian, like Sainte-Beuve, a moralist like Matthew Arnold, or a technician like Dr. Bridges. He ought to be aware of his predisposition

and alert to prevent it from running away with him. A perfect critic would combine all these predispositions in equal parts, but perfect critics are at least as rare as perfect writers. It is as much as one can ask that a critic should try to correct his predisposition by training his appreciation of other kinds.

Once criticism is accepted as an independent literary art, there need be no heart-searching among critics because they have so little practical influence on the sale of books. That is the fact in England at any rate. It is a hundred times more profitable to an author for the *Daily Mail* to declare " This book will be a success " than for the best critic on the *Times Literary Supplement* to give exact and convincing reasons why the book ought to be a success. Critical articles and essays are read for themselves; at their best they are perfectly self-contained; they do not demand that the reader should dash out and purchase the books which they discuss, and as often as not they are read with the greatest interest by those who are already themselves profoundly familiar with the subject.

Putting a valuation upon new books is perhaps the least valuable, as it is certainly the most dangerous, part of criticism. It is almost impossible for a literary critic to be really sincere in dealing with contemporary production. It is as difficult for him to tell the truth about the bad work of men who have done good, as to tell the truth about the good work of men who have done bad. In the first case his hand is checked by fear of doing harm, in the second by the fear of doing good. Again, it is intolerable to be severe to a well-meaning beginner, although a critic knows that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. There are too many thorns in the path of criticism of contemporaries. For we have not even mentioned the personal resentment too often cherished by our victims. The dangers of log-rolling are at

least equalled by the dangers of revenge. A successful author, however much he may be dubious of the genuineness of his own powers, cannot help believing that his success is somehow due to his merits; he is bound to persuade himself that a slating is the expression of some personal hostility.

Unfortunately, few critics are in the happy position of being able to write about contemporaries only when they can sincerely praise them. For the most part they have to conform to the exigencies of reviewing, to write on texts they could not choose, to consider susceptibilities that are an obstacle to their free expression. No doubt the English tradition of anonymity is a defence against some of these evils. But it leaves the door open to other worse ones. A critic does not care to hide behind an editorial " we " when he attacks a writer; nor on the other hand is it good to be compelled always to hide one's light under a bushel. A good criticism is as much a work of art as a good poem; its author deserves his reward in reputation as well as money. Besides, if his readers are not permitted to distinguish his work they cannot follow the sequence and evolution of his ideas. A critic cannot be always enunciating his principles. What looks like the veriest dogmatism in an isolated review, may, if put into relation to other utterances, be seen to have a convincing scheme of values behind it.

Criticism is an art. It has its own technique. Ideally, at least, this technique would have its different perfection for each several critic. But we may outline so much of the method as seems to be essential to the most important kind of criticism, appreciation.

First, the critic should endeavor to convey the whole effect of the work he is criticising, its peculiar uniqueness. Second, to work back and define the unique quality of the sensibility which necessitated this expression. Third, to establish the determining causes of this sensibility. Here the relevant

circumstances of the writer's life have their proper place.) Fourth, to analyse the means by which this sensibility was given expression, in other words, to conduct a technical examination into the style. Fifth, a still closer examination of a perfectly characteristic passage, that is, a passage in which the author's sensibility is completely expressed. This fifth and final movement is really a return to the first, but with the important difference that the relevant material has been ordered and placed before the reader.

The various phases in this symphonic movement of an ideal criticism may, of course, be ordered quite differently. The historical or the ethical critic will enlarge more on the nature of the sensibility, its value in itself and its relation to other types of sensibility; he will pay little or no attention to the means by which this sensibility is expressed. He will not be a worse critic for that, but he will be a less *literary* critic. On the other hand, the critic who is unable to adjudicate between the values of various kinds of sensibility has no means of distinguishing between great art and perfect art. That judgment is essential to a true criticism, in spite of (or rather in virtue of) the fact that it is in the last resort an ethical judgment.

There is not much need to worry ourselves about the function of criticism any more than we worry about the function of poetry. Both are arts; both have to give delight; both have to give the delights which are proper to themselves as arts. If it gives this delight criticism is creative, for it enables the reader to discover beauties and significances which he had not seen, or to see those which he had himself inglimpsed in a new and revealing light. What, I think, we may reasonably ask, is that criticism should be less timid; that it should openly accept the fact that its deepest judgments are moral. A critic should be conscious of his moral assumptions and take pains to put into them the highest

morality of which he is capable. That is only another way of saying that the critic should be conscious of himself as an artist. He should be aware of the responsibilities imposed by his art; he should respect the technique of his craft. He should not be cheap, he should not be shallow, he should not be insincere, either in praise or blame, but above all in these modern times, he should not be insincere in praise.

THE TRUE STATUS OF THE AMERICAN SHORT STORY

FRED LEWIS PATTEE

The enormous interest which, owing to certain special conditions of the publishing business, attaches to the short story in our country has fostered an extravagant notion of its importance in relation to other literary forms. The glamor of commercial success attending it has even dazzled academic circles. Mr. Pattee's essay is a much needed, thoroughly wholesome protest against the prevailing attitude. Mr. Pattee is a professor at Pennsylvania State College who speaks with special authority on matters pertaining to American literature. With his wide knowledge of the field and his appreciation of the principles involved in all good writing, he has no difficulty in pricking the inflated pretensions of the short story's partisans and in assigning its own reasonable bounds to the form. He addresses himself to the attack with a vigor and straightforwardness which we do not associate with the academic style. (*The True Status of the American Short Story* appeared in *The English Journal*, September, 1923, and was reprinted in *Tradition and Jazz*, 1925.)

THE TRUE STATUS OF THE AMERICAN SHORT STORY

I

CONCERNING no other literary subject, save perhaps modern verse, has more foolishness been written during the past three decades than concerning the American short story. The technique of it has been raised to an exact science with codified laws, furnishing semester courses in colleges and even in high schools. The literature of it — the manuals and handbooks and year-books and the collections for school use — has made necessary a new alcove in the public libraries. Correspondence schools that teach it as a trade as they do bricklaying and electrical engineering have arisen and flourished. After thirty lessons, it may be after twenty, the pupil is ready for a literary career. "To-day our students are writing for practically every magazine of consequence in the United States, Canada, and England," declares the dean of the correspondence courses. His alumni, he believes, are beginning to be dominating forces in the literary world. At least one college professor of literature, he affirms, has proved the value of his short-story course by cold figures: a given number in his last class had a given number of stories accepted by the magazines within six months with a total cash return of a given number of dollars. From these known data it was easy to compute probabilities: the average number of probable rejections before success; the approximate cash value of a first story; the magazines most likely to accept stories of beginners; and the returns

that reasonably might be expected per month or per year by diligent takers of his course.

Short-story writing is therefore now a trade-school matter, a hand-work vocation to be acquired by mere diligence and mastery of technique. Moreover, it is taught, even in the universities, as a newness, as a newly discovered literary form the laws of which have only recently been worked out. The student who elects it is made to feel that he has been given the privilege of breaking loose from the old conventional "pennyroyal" literary course that led nowhere, and of entering under modern guidance newly charted areas, practical, scientific, businesslike. For the first time now he has a literary subject that has an object; there is concreteness at the goal of it. Even the "rough-necks" of the class can take literature now and appreciate it; it can be thought of in terms of a job. And even the "highbrows" may ask, Why Study Milton and Matthew Arnold when one can take a literary course breathing the very life of one's own day? Read O. Henry and the O'Brien annuals, learn the rules and become yourself an O. Henry with words to market "worth ten cents per." Why not? Jack London did it. He viewed with supreme contempt his teachers and his courses in English literature and went away and mastered the laws of modern writing all by himself. Had his professors, he sneered, been able to write stories that "Everybody's" would buy, they would have resigned their professorships and become well-paid literary men. To the dump with such professors and such sterile subjects! Studying Whittier and Ben Jonson gets you nowhere. It is the voice of the younger generation. Teachers scoff at it, yet everywhere they are heeding it.

To read the text-books prepared for these students is to be filled with impatience. Criticism of the short story has been for the most part shallow. Laws are laid down dog-

matically as if the short-story "genre" was something radically different from all other literary forms. Poe in 1842 said nearly all that needs to be said about it: he gave some five or six suggestions, but practically all that Poe said had previously been said by Aristotle in his "Art of Poetry." Literary laws are for the most part universal, applying equally to all forms. Only one fundamental rule for the short story is actually imperative: *it must be short.* All the rest — unity, momentum, immediateness, and the like — are simply the inevitable accompaniments of shortness. There are, too, certain half-digested statements that have been passed parrot-like from text-book to text-book, as, for instance, that the short story is a distinctively American *invention,* like the electric light; that it has been an *evolution* through a century or more of American life; that it is a type which has flourished because of the American temperament: the tired business man after his strenuous day demands fiction that can be finished at a sitting, something that will "get" him at the first sentence, that will lead him on with vivacity and humor and cumulative power, and that suddenly will "get" him again at the end and leave him in a glow. From such material has grown the American short-story legend. But the short story has been neither an invention nor an evolution, nor has it been made abundant because of the tired business man. Shortened fiction in America has resulted, to be sure, from peculiarly American conditions, but nobody invented it as the electric light was invented; there has been no gradual step-by-step evolution — each decade better than the preceding until the present decade is the most perfect of all. It has been a haphazard result of unique American conditions. It has resulted from international copyright conditions and from the attendant multiplication of magazines; it has come out of the peculiar conditions of the puritanical contempt for fiction, of the rough

conditions of the frontier with its unique materials for narrative, and of the American headlong temperament that writes in short dashes more characteristically than in long-drawn-out narratives patiently evolved. It has been obedient to the voice of fashion, some decades running to one variety of it and some to another; and it has been read for the most part by women — also a distinctively American result.

It is time to seek the sun. Whither have we drifted? What is the true latitude of the American short story?

II

That it is a literary form, just as in poetry the ballad is a literary form, is nowhere disputed now. It is evident that a single-number magazine story cannot be a novel, and, even though it be romantic, it cannot be a romance. Like the ballad it is a single stroke, a flash-light upon a single area of life yielding a single glimpse. There can be no study of life as a whole; there is no time for exploring complicated areas; and there can be no development in the characters. But this element of shortness brings difficulty. The novelist with twenty, or even twelve, magazine instalments at his command can ramble and explain and leisurely bring to life a whole neighborhood and years of time, but the short-story writer is limited at every point. To work without surplusage is one of the last accomplishments of the artist, and here he must pack a maximum of material into a minimum of space. To do it requires artifices that the more leisurely novelist need not consider. If one is forbidden lengthy exposition, one must get one's effects by suggestion, by subtle hints and nuances that lead the reader himself to complete pictures and assign consequences. Brevity demands perfection. The sonnet is a supremely difficult poetic form chiefly because it

is so short that even the slightest defect can be detected at a glance. There is hardly a requirement laid down for the short story that is not also a requirement for longer forms of story-telling, but in the short story the requirements are all in the imperative mood. And here it may be noted that the late insistence in America upon faultless short-story technique has reacted upon the novel, shortening it and greatly improving its mechanical artistry. The short story has been the apprentice form for novelists, and one trained early in its rigid requirements becomes habitually impatient of prolixity. A study of our leading writers of fiction will reveal that almost without exception the short fiction came first and very often was the author's best product. The young writer finds it hard to secure a publisher. He is unknown, and his first work must be accepted on its face-value alone. Therefore, he expends exceeding care on his work. The story is returned again and again, and he rewrites it, sometimes months after its first creation. Gradually it becomes better and better until some magazine finds it worth publishing. Cable's " Old Creole Days " collection he never surpassed: and it was because he put more patient work and more carefully chosen material into the seven short stories than he did even into the great volume of the " Grandissimes " romance. Bret Harte never equaled his " Luck of Roaring Camp " volume; Charles Egbert Craddock in all her later work fell below the level of " In the Tennessee Mountains." It is useless to cite further examples. And the writers began with short stories simply because short stories were more marketable. A novel might require a year or more of hard work and if unmarketable a whole year had been lost. In the same time ten or twelve short stories might be written — ten or twelve chances. A few of them at least should succeed. Hence the short story

may be called the apprentice form of fiction, a form, however, that many have adhered to after they have fully mastered the art.

III

That the short story has flourished peculiarly in America has been the result of causes that we may fairly call unique. No phase of American literary history is more interesting. It is worth lingering upon. Irving was the first American to write short prose pieces with distinction. All his early reading and all his literary ideals had come from the eighteenth century, and it was inevitable that his first attempts at writing should be modeled after Addison and Steele and Goldsmith. "Salmagundi" was the nineteenth-century "Spectator" or "Bee," over-spirited, perhaps, youth written on every page, yet nevertheless a periodical, a miscellany, a salmagundi — meat and pepper and salt and garlic and a dash of soothing oil. Brevity was the soul of it, and the literary form was largely narrative. Twelve years later its author found himself stranded in England without money and without a profession. Perforce he must turn to his pen, and his first thought was a periodical, another "Salmagundi." The result was "The Sketch-Book," a magazine miscellany — it was first issued as a periodical — made up of expository pieces and short narratives in various keys. The first number contained "Rip Van Winkle," which was hailed instantly as a classic.

The effect of "The Sketch-Book" upon American literature cannot be overestimated. It was the most widely influential literary production that America has ever produced. Its ingratiating style, and, more than all else, its tremendous English vogue, impressed greatly the new young group of writers that was just forming: Bryant, Prescott, Paulding,

Dana, Sands, Everett, Kennedy, and, later, Hawthorne, Simms, Willis, Longfellow, and Poe. The era that followed was the era of "sketches." Everybody wrote them. Bryant wrote enough tales for a volume. Edward Everett and Prescott, and, later, Longfellow and Whittier and most of the women, all, indeed, who wrote at all, poured them out in abundance: tales sentimental and sad, legends, Indian and adventure yarns, ghost-stories, nutshell romances, all of them of the Irving variety. Opportunities, however, for publication were limited. Books of stories by unknown writers were not profitable in the period when the best current English books could be had without copyright expense; magazines were few and feeble, and the story columns of the weekly newspapers were limited and, even when gained, profitless to the author. Some printed collections of sketches at their own expense; others, like Dana and Prescott and Kennedy, issued "Salmagundi" periodicals; still others, like Hawthorne and Poe, contributed perforce their earliest work to the weekly newspapers.

At this critical moment there came from Germany by way of England the annual, or gift-book: the "Atlantic Souvenir," 1826, the first volume, then "The Token," "The Legendary," and the like, miscellanies of prose and verse that soon became so popular that they dominated the book-stands of America. The enormous success of the annual enabled it to pay prices before unheard of. It became the outlet for the flood of sketch-book material that everywhere had been gathering. Much of Hawthorne's early work appeared first in "The Token," paid for at prices that lightened his discouragement and kept him toiling on in hope of final recognition. A new younger group was called out by the demands of the rapidly increasing tribe of "Souvenirs," "Irises," "Gems," and "Forget-Me-Nots." Then with the thirties came "Godey's Lady's Book," inspired by the success of

the annuals and modeled after them in every respect save that it made its appearance monthly. Its success was phenomenal. Under the editorship of Sara Josepha Hale it achieved a vogue that has not been exceeded even by " The Ladies' Home Journal " of the present period. It paid what in its time were sensational prices, and it not only attracted to its columns the leading writers of its day but it gathered together a new and surprisingly large school of fiction writers, the most of them women. From the first the new journal insisted on stories that should be complete in each number. Readers, it declared, were angry if they had to wait a month to find out what had happened to the heroine. Writers of fiction that could be sold were compelled, therefore, to furnish it in short pieces.

The success of " Godey's " called forth a swarm of popular magazines, " Peterson's," " Burton's," " Graham's," " Sartain's," and the like, all of them demanding fiction of magazine length. The three decades after 1830 may be called, so far as fiction is concerned, the period of the Irving-like sentimental " sketch," or the period of " Godey's Lady's Book " tales or short stories.

In English literature it was preëminently the period of the novel, the great era of Bulwer, Disraeli, Dickens, Kingsley, the Brontës, Thackeray, Eliot, Trollope, and Read, but America, during that period, produced few distinctive novels. Cooper because of his unique subject-matter, and later Mrs. Stowe, were able to make headway with novels but the lack of an international copyright law was for years an almost insuperable handicap to American novelists. Why buy American novels when English novels of the first rank could be had for nothing? Willis complained bitterly of the conditions that compelled him to abandon his unsalable novels, and break them into short tales for the magazines, " like the sculptor who made toys of the fragments of his unsalable

Jupiter." The result was inevitable: American writers produced what they could sell, short magazine fiction, and a constantly increasing number of periodicals made more and more varied their market. Poe called the forties and fifties the magazine period; he might have called it the period of short sentimental tales made for the magazine market. The result was a group of women writers of fiction in number unique up to that time in the history of literature.

The Civil War decreased the production of novels but not the flow of short stories. " The Atlantic Monthly," founded in 1857, produced a notable series of them by Hale, Mrs. Spofford, Mrs. Cooke, and Rebecca Harding Davis. Then shortly after the war came the most sensational literary success since " Uncle Tom's Cabin " — Bret Harte's California stories headed by " The Luck of Roaring Camp." Shortly afterward appeared Aldrich's " Marjorie Daw," Craddock's " In the Tennessee Mountains " sensation, and Stockton's " The Lady or the Tiger? " All of these were short stories excitedly advertised and widely sold, and the new generation of writers, which was then gathering, learned early that the surest and most rapid road to success lay through the magazines and the production of short magazine forms *à la mode*. Everything from the first had conspired to make the short story the leading literary form for America. It was not an evolution but an inevitable result of American conditions during a century.

That it is a distinct *genre* with laws of its own was discovered by Poe in 1842 and discussed by him in what is really the first document in short-story criticism, his review of Hawthorne's " Twice-Told-Tales." No one, however, seems to have read Poe's criticism, and no one, so far as I have been able to discover, was at all influenced by it. Up to comparatively recent times the short story was simply the *short* story; it was an abbreviated novel to be written as its

author's caprice might direct. That a few, like Hawthorne and Poe, produced work that can be measured by modern rules came from the fact that they were artists enough unconsciously to apply with precision the laws fundamental to all literature.

The style of the story-telling changed from period to period after the changing fashions of the times, but aside from the fact that the nineteenth century, as it became more scientific, became more and more intolerant of surplusage and prolixity and more and more insistent upon vivacity of style and finesse in plot management, it cannot be said that the short-story form was an evolution — a steady progress from the crude toward the perfect. The classic specimens of the form lie in every decade of its history, and they live perhaps more abundantly in the earlier decades than in the later. The change from period to period was rather a change in fashion. The thirties and the forties, for instance, were sentimental and romantic; the fifties and the sixties took a turn toward the realistic; the seventies were influenced by Harte and Aldrich; the eighties splashed everything with local color; the nineties swung toward " veritism " ; the new century, influenced by O. Henry, became enamored of technique; and just at present the " younger generation " seems to be breaking away from technique and straining after the strikingly original both in form and subject-matter, after the unusual and even the fantastic. Like every younger generation, too, it seems impatient of the old methods and the old forms and is loudly proclaiming that *now* the *truth* is to be told concerning human life, the *whole* truth and at any cost.

IV

Is the form worth the prominence that to-day the colleges and the schools are giving it? Are we to feel flattered when

we hear it proclaimed that American literature is rich and original in its short stories, with perhaps implied inference that it is rich and original only at this point? Are the novel and the romance superior literary forms? Can life be viewed steadily and viewed whole if we are content to glimpse it only for the space of a *conte?* These are questions not to be easily answered. One may clear the way for a reply by pointing out that every one of the short-story writers has looked longingly at the novel and the romance as the goal of his ambition and has escaped to them at the first possible opportunity. Hawthorne is a case in point. Harte when once he had been recognized by the East turned joyfully to poetry and to a novel, his "Gabriel Conroy." But Harte's vein of pure metal was a thin one, how thin time has already proved, and he was forced to spend the rest of his literary life working what was not a bonanza lode but a limited placer bank, with here and there a nugget. Howells wrote no short stories till late in life for the simple reason that his connection with the "Atlantic" gave him from the first an outlet for his novels. James, however, was forced to serve his apprenticeship with magazine-lengths, and when at last he was able to market with certainty a full-length narrative he did so, though from time to time he made "short-lengths" as caprice dictated. In his later years he declared that stepping from the short story to the novel was like stepping from a cockle-shell boat to the deck of a ship of the line.

But this does not answer the question. It is doubtful if it can be answered dogmatically. One may inquire in rebuttal, Is the lyric poem, which is a single cry from an individual soul, a form superior to the epic, which is a prolonged area of human action viewed objectively? Is the simple song which voices a simple moment's mood inferior to the symphony which deals with many emotions and many

characters, and shapes at last the complicated action to a conclusion? Is " Home, Sweet Home " inferior to the opera " Clari," of which it was a fragment? But in the short-story we are forced to consider not only brevities, flashlight snaps at life, but briefly seen areas and individuals that can move us only for the moment, sensationally. We do not know these characters; they are strangers flashed a moment on the film and forever gone. Their tragedy affects us as the spectacle of an unknown man run over in a street-accident would affect us: a moment's thrill of horror; that is all. If it had been our brother or our son we should *feel* it. A novel, however, is an area of life large enough for more than mere momentary sensation. We are moved into a little neighborhood and permitted to live there until we know its small circle as we know our own friends; we have seen them grow and develop under stress of love or hate or suffering, and we have felt cause and effect and have had presented to us a philosophy of life; we have, indeed, if it has been a great novel. Such art grips and abides. We forget the short story just as we forget the movie we saw yesterday. It has made no deep impress; it has simply titillated us for the moment, and made us eager for another sensation. With the novel it is different. We do not forget Squire Western, or Becky Sharp, or Hester Prynne. Frank Norris set the utmost vogue of a short story at a month: " If very good, it will create a demand for another short story by the same author, but that particular contribution, the original one, is irretrievably and hopelessly dead."

It was a diagnosis of the literary disease America is suffering from to-day. Like Hamlet, our fiction has become " fat and scant of breath." The reading public is being fed with sensational fragments; brief narratives of strange localities, and strange individualities painted with exaggeration; brief tales with a gasp of surprise at the end; tales with

breathless plot interest; swift anecdotes, vivid studies of sex adventure, sordid with realism — everywhere fragments, and the reader rushes from episode to episode as the motorist of to-day rushes through the landscape, or as the eye of the "movie fan" races from reel to reel. No more is there repose; no more is there life seen steadily and seen whole. The art of the short story, as it is now taught, is the art of securing instant returns with no thought beyond.

But an even graver charge may be brought against the short story, especially in its present fashion: it is "close-up stuff," ephemeral in its subject-matter, woven of contemporary materials, unripened, unsubdued by time. Great art requires perspective. Hawthorne used the colonial period two centuries and more away from him, but even of this material he complained with bitterness. It was too brightly illuminated by the garish light of the present to work into the mellow finish his exquisite sense of art demanded. The writers, focussed by O'Brien in his annual collection of the "best" short stories of the year and by the O. Henry award committee of the Society of Arts and Sciences, deal almost wholly with current newspaper material, the most of it drawn from the sordid and sensational areas of life. O. Henry, the typical short-story writer of the period, was a member of the staff of a New York daily, and his work as a reporter was to secure one story each week from the current life of the city about him. The result was either highly entertaining vaudeville or else illustrative material for courses in social science or eugenics or psychology. It is impossible to throw upon such raw and undigested material any other light than that of journalism or the movies or of the vaudeville stage or of the scientific clinic; certainly it is impossible to throw over it the mellow light of great literature. It lacks perspective; it lacks soul. Walt Whitman is a great literary figure, not because of his earlier poems of the body,

but because of his later discovery of " the passage to India," his glimpse of the immaterial soul of man.

And for the most part, though it is the leading form in an age demanding Truth, the short story is not true. It deals with selected characters, usually characters selected because of outstanding qualities, and it leaves the inference that these are types. In a coeducational college body of one thousand students, one couple, perhaps, every year will elope, a half-dozen men will frequent a gambling-house, two or three will be half-backs, twenty-five or thirty will be dropped for poor scholarship, and a dozen or so of the girls will be " flappers." These furnish the story-material possibilities of the college, and readers reading these stories conclude that this is college life. But the vast majority of the students are not gamblers at all or flappers or half-backs or " flunkers." Could a box of our short-story books reach Mars and the red planet from them make a study of our civilization, what would be the conclusion? It would be like material gathered by a photographer who selected carefully the subjects for his snap shots. Nowhere studies of the whole, but everywhere selected startling moments.

V

Shall the short story be offered as a course in schools and colleges? Yes, unquestionably, if it is taught with the proper focus by a teacher who knows literature. As a vehicle for conveying knowledge of the fundamental laws of composition and of literary art it has no superior. Its interesting content holds the attention of the class; its brief compass makes it easy to analyze; and its deft avoidance of prolixity and its constant demand for precise vocabulary set the learner early on the right path to mastery of composition. But let not the teacher exploit it as a wholly new

form with unique laws rendering obsolete all literary laws up to the last decade, for all that the student's handbook teaches concerning characterization and suggestion and dialogue and restraint and unity and much of the other literary qualities which the form demands has applied always and equally to all narrative be it in prose or poetry. And let him not lead his class to feel that he is teaching them the last word as to literature. Let the course be simply a course in composition, or a minor phase of literary history. The present tendency of students to be contemptuous of the past and to dismiss the great masters who have made the classics that are standard forever for the makers of the clever ephemeræ of to-day should be discouraged with all emphasis.

Should students be encouraged to enter correspondence-school short-story courses simply for possible financial ends? Most assuredly so, if they are told frankly that what they seek to acquire is not an art but a trade, and what they seek to procure is not literature but possibly salable journalistic copy. And it should be impressed upon them that as in every other branch of artistry the great masters have been exceedingly few and that there has not been one of them who was not born for his work and who acquired his wizard skill not from teachers and courses but from his own struggling soul.

NOTES ON OUR CIVILIZATION

ALDOUS HUXLEY

Mr. Aldous Huxley, a grandson of the scientist, has very rapidly won an important place among contemporary writers. He has chosen the novel as his medium more frequently than the discursive essay, but even his novels are more interesting for their ideas than for plot or character. His earlier work is saturated with the sophistication and cynicism of the younger generation, but as one book follows another his earnestness of purpose becomes more and more clearly apparent. In his most recent work, *Jesting Pilate,* he moralizes with a furious intensity. In the form of a collection of travel-notes he puts together reflections on the countries which pass under his eye, criticizing their civilizations with indignant ruthlessness. In the light of the new things that he observes he takes the measure of the old values of western Europe, his conclusions being generally favorable to the habits of thought which he brings with him. For making comparisons he is excellently equipped by his many-sided cultivation. Of course his judgments are in many cases snap judgments, resting on impressions gleaned in a hasty flight around the world. Yet even though they may not be justly balanced, they are likely to stimulate by their vividness, to provoke sober thought by their satiric extravagance. What he has to say about motion pictures as a reflection of western civilization and about the destruction of values in America, where democracy is taken to mean that anything is as good as anything else, is well worth heeding. The plainness and boldness of Mr. Huxley's speech corresponds with the frankness of his criticism. (The two accompanying selections are taken from *Jesting Pilate,* 1926.)

NOTES ON OUR CIVILIZATION

BATAVIA. At Weltevreden there is a plot of ground dedicated to the pleasures of the natives and called the Gambier Park. At the entrance gate you pay according to your nationality — Javanese five cents, foreign Orientals (Chinese or Arab) fifteen, and Europeans, half a gulden. We admitted the equitableness of the tariff — for in every tropical land the poorest people are always the inhabitants — shouldered the white man's burden to the tune of fifty cents apiece and walked in. The thick, almost palpable darkness of a night overcast by tropical clouds was tempered by a few sparse arc lamps and by the dim lanterns of mineral water vendors. Their light was reflected from puddles; it had been raining. The night felt and smelt like a hothouse. It seemed strange to be walking in the open. Surely there was a glass roof just overhead, there were glass walls all round us. And where were the hot-water pipes?

The sound of drums and bamboo xylophones, that tinkled out the endless and incoherent music of a dripping tap, drew us across the grass. Under a bright light twenty or thirty Javanese young men and girls were gravely dancing. Nobody spoke. They went through their evolutions without a word. I was reminded of the noiseless coming and going of an aquarium, of the mute ecstasies of embracing octopuses, of submarine battles, ferocious but inaudible. It is a strangely silent people, the Javanese. Some merman, perhaps, from the soundless depths among the corals was the first colonist of the island. We stood for some time watching the dumb Tritons in their batik skirts or trousers, the voiceless but, I am afraid, far from respectable nereids. Then, since one easily tires of goldfish, we strolled away in search of livelier entertainment.

But mum was still the word. Fifty yards away we found an open-air picture show. A crowd, as fishily dumb as the young dancers, stood or squatted in front of an illuminated screen, across which there came and went, in an epileptic silence, the human fishes of a cinema drama. And what a drama! We arrived in time to see a man in what the lady novelists call " faultless evening dress," smashing a door with an axe, shooting several other men and then embracing against her will a distressed female, also in evening dress. Meanwhile another man was hurrying from somewhere to somewhere else, in motor cars that tumbled over precipices, in trains that villains contrived to send full tilt into rivers — in vain, however, for the hurrying young man always jumped off the doomed vehicles in the nick of time and immediately found another and still more rapid means of locomotion. We did not stay to witness the foregone conclusion; but it was sufficiently obvious that the man in the hurry would find an aeroplane which would duly crash on the roof of the house where the distressed female was being embraced against her will. He would rush in and be just in time to prevent the consummation of a long protracted rape. (I may add parenthetically that rape, on the cinema, is always providentially leisurely; the villain takes things so easily that heroes invariably have the time to drive in Straight-Eights from Salt Lake City to New York before the virtuous resistance of the heroine can be overcome.) The villain would then be shot and the young man and distressed female would embrace, lengthily and with gusto, over his carcase.

The violent imbecilities of the story flickered in silence against the background of the equatorial night. In silence the Javanese looked on. What were they thinking? What were their private comments on this exhibition of Western civilization? I wondered. In North Africa, in India, I have

also wondered. There are many races, skins of many shades; there are the colonies of many white nations, there are protectorates and mandated territories; there are nominally free countries that give "concessions" — a great variety of political institutions and subject peoples. But there is only one Hollywood. Arabs and Melanesians, negroes and Indians, Malays and Chinamen — all see the same films. The crook drama at Tunis is the same as the crook drama at Madras. On the same evening, it may be, in Korea, in Sumatra, in the Sudan they are looking at the same seven soulful reels of mother love and adultery. The same fraudulent millionaires are swindling for the diversion of a Burmese audience in Mandalay, a Maori audience in New Zealand. Over the entire globe the producers of Hollywood are the missionaries and propagandists of white civilization. It is from the films alone that the untaught and untravelled member of a subject race can learn about the superior civilization which has conquered and is ruling him.

And what does he learn from the films? What is this famous civilization of the white men which Hollywood reveals? These are questions which one is almost ashamed to answer. The world into which the cinema introduces the subject peoples is a world of silliness and criminality. When its inhabitants are not stealing, murdering, swindling or attempting to commit rape (too slowly, as we have seen, to be often completely successful), they are being maudlin about babies or dear old homes, they are being fantastically and idiotically honourable in a manner calculated to bring the greatest possible discomfort to the greatest possible number of people, they are disporting themselves in marble halls, they are aimlessly dashing about the earth's surface in fast moving vehicles. When they make money they do it only in the most discreditable, unproductive and socially mischievous way — by speculation. Their politics are mat-

ters exclusively of personal (generally amorous) intrigue. Their science is an affair of secret recipes for making money — recipes which are always getting stolen by villains no less anxious for cash than the scientific hero himself. Their religion is all cracker mottoes, white-haired clergymen, large-hearted mothers, hard, Bible-reading puritanical fathers and young girls who have taken the wrong turning and been betrayed (the rapes, thank goodness, are occasionally successful) kneeling with their illegitimate babies in front of crucifixes. As for their art — it consists in young men in overalls and large ties painting, in cock lofts, feminine portraits worthy to figure on the covers of magazines. And their literature is the flatulent verbiage of the captions.

Such is the white man's world as revealed by the films, a world of crooks and half wits, morons and sharpers. A crude, immature, childish world. A world without subtlety, without the smallest intellectual interests, innocent of art, letters, philosophy, science. A world where there are plenty of motors, telephones and automatic pistols, but in which there is no trace of such a thing as a modern idea. A world where men and women have instincts, desires and emotions, but no thoughts. A world, in brief, from which all that gives the modern West its power, its political and, I like patriotically to think, its spiritual superiority to the East, all that makes it a hemisphere which one is proud to have been born in and happy to return to, has been left out. To the subject races of the East and South, Hollywood proclaims us as a people of criminals and mentally defective. It was better, surely, in the old days before the cinema was invented when the white men's subjects were totally ignorant of the world in which their masters lived. It was possible for them, then, to believe that the white men's civilization was something great and marvelous — something even greater, perhaps, and more extraordinary than it really was. Hollywood has

changed all that. It has scattered broadcast over the brown and black and yellow world a grotesquely garbled account of our civilization. It has published a journal of our activities, but heavily censored. The political and scientific articles, the reviews of books, the essays, the reports of learned societies have been cut out; there are blanks where the reproductions of the works of art should be. Nothing has been left but the police court news, the feuilleton, the reports of the divorce cases. White men complain that the attitude of the members of the coloured races is not so respectful as it was. Can one be astonished?

What astonishes me is that the attitude remains as respectful as it does. Standing in the midst of that silent crowd of Javanese picture fans, I was astonished when the performance attained its culminating imbecility, that they did not all with one accord turn on us with hoots of derision, with mocking and murderous violence. I was astonished that they did not all rush in a body through the town crying "Why should we be ruled any longer by imbeciles?" and murdering every white man they met. The drivelling nonsense that flickered there in the darkness, under the tropical clouds, was enough to justify any outburst. But fortunately for us, the Oriental is patient and long-suffering. He is also cautious; for he knows, in the words of Hilaire Belloc, that

> Whatever happens, we have got
> The Maxim-gun, and they have not . . .

"we" being the whites.

Maxim guns can check actions, but they cannot control thoughts. The coloured people think a great deal less of us than they did, even though they may be too cautious to act on their opinions. For this state of affairs the movies are not, of course, alone responsible. The spread of native education, the unedifying spectacle of the World War, the talk

about self-determination and the sacredness of nationality, with promises of liberation made and never carried into effect — these have done much, perhaps most. But the share of Hollywood in lowering the white man's prestige is by no means inconsiderable. A people whose own propagandists proclaim it to be mentally and morally deficient cannot expect to be looked up to. If films were really true to life, the whole of Europe and America would deserve to be handed over as mandated territories to the Basutos, the Papuans and the Andaman pygmies. Fortunately, they are not true. We who were born in the West and live there, know it. But the untutored mind of the poor Indian does not know it. He sees the films, he thinks they represent Western reality, he cannot see why he should be ruled by criminal imbeciles. As we turned, disgusted from the idiotic spectacle and threaded our way out of the crowd, that strange aquarium silence of the Javanese was broken by a languid snigger of derision. Nothing more. Just a little laugh. A word or two of mocking comment in Malay and then, once more, the silence as of fish. A few more years of Hollywood's propaganda and perhaps we shall not get out of an Oriental crowd quite so easily.

CHICAGO. Turning over the pages of the Chicago telephone directory, I came upon a full-page advertisement of a firm of undertakers, or " morticians," as they are now more elegantly styled in America. The type was large and bold; my eye was fatally caught. I interrupted my search to read, in twenty lines of lyrical prose, an appreciation of the incomparable Service which Kalbsfleisch and Company were rendering to Society. Their shop, I learned, was a mortuary chapel in the Gothic style; their caskets (the grosser English would call them coffins) were elegant, silk-lined and cheap; their motor-hearses were funereally sump-

tuous; their manners towards the bereaved were grave, yet cheering, yet purposefully uplifting; and they were fortunate in being able to "lay the Loved Ones to rest in —— graveyard, the Cemetery Unusual." Service was their motto and always would be. Service whole-hearted and unflagging. And to prove that they meant it, personally and individually, they had reproduced two photographs, one of Mr. Kalbsfleisch, the Governing Director of the Firm, and the other of charming Mrs. Kalbsfleish, Licensed Embalmer.

I remained for some time in meditative contemplation of Mrs. Kalbsfleisch's smile; I re-read more than once her husband's poetical and uplifting prose. The page on which I now gazed was something more, I reflected, than a mere page of advertising in a telephone book. It was a page out of contemporary American history. Something is happening on the Western shore of the Atlantic, something that has already made America unlike any other country in the world, something that threatens to separate it still further from the older civilizations, unless (which God forbid) the older civilizations should themselves fall victims to the same distorting process. To any one who reads and inwardly digests Mr. Kalbsfleisch's advertisement in the Chicago telephone book, the nature of this strange historical process becomes clear. The page is a symptom and a revealing symbol.

The thing which is happening in America is a revaluation of values, a radical alteration (for the worse) of established standards. Mr. Kalbsfleisch shows us how far the process has already gone. How much farther it may go we cannot guess, nor to what consummation it will lead, nor whether there may be reactions and counter-processes.

There are two ways in which the existing standards of value may be altered. In the first case, the very existence of values may be denied. In the second, values are admitted, but the mode in which they are assigned is changed: things

which in the past had been regarded as possessing great value are disparaged or, more often, things which were previously considered of small value come to be regarded as precious.

In Europe such attempts as have been made to alter the existing standard of values have generally taken the form of denials of the existence of values. Our belief that things possess value is due to an immediate sense or intuition; we feel, and feeling we know, that things have value. If men have doubted the real existence of values, that is because they have not trusted their own immediate and intuitive conviction. They have required an intellectual, a logical and "scientific" proof of their existence. Now such a proof is not easily found at the best of times. But when you start your argumentation from the premises laid down by scientific materialism, it simply cannot be discovered. Indeed, any argument starting from these premises must infallibly end in a denial of the real existence of values. Fortunately human beings are capable of enormous inconsistencies, and the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century men of science, whose conception of the universe was such that values could not be regarded by them as possessing any sort of real existence, were in practice the most ardent upholders of the established standards of values.

Still the materialist conception of the universe could not fail to exert an influence. The generation of Arnold and of Tennyson sat uncomfortably on the horns of what seemed an unescapable dilemma. Either the materialist hypothesis was true; in which case there was no such thing as value. Or else it was false; in which case values really existed, but science could not. But science manifestly *did* exist. The electric telegraph and the steam engine were there to prove it. The fact that you could go into any post office and communicate almost instantaneously with the antipodes was felt to be a confirmation of the materialistic hypothesis then

current among men of science. It worked, therefore it was true, and therefore our intimate sense of the existence of values was a mere illusion. Tennyson and Arnold did not want it to be an illusion; they were distressed, they were inwardly divided. Their intellects denied what their feelings asserted; and the Truth (or rather what was at that time apparently the Truth) was at war with their hopes, their intuitive convictions, their desires. The European intellectuals of a later generation accepted the conclusions logically derivable from the scientific-materialist hypothesis and resigned themselves — almost with glee — to living in a devaluated world. Some of them are still with us, and the theories which they propounded, as corollaries to the main value-denying theory from which they started, are still influential. Claiming to speak as the apostles of scientific truth, they stripped art of its significance, they reinterpreted human life in terms, not of its highest, spiritual aspects, but of its lowest. (I am using the terms "highest" and "lowest," which they, of course, would repudiate as nonsensical.) A less sophisticated generation had regarded the Sistine frescoes as being somehow superior to a prettily patterned rug, *Macbeth* as more important than *The Rape of the Lock*. Illusion! According to the apostles of scientific truth, one was really just as good as the other. Indeed, the *Rape* and the patterned rug were actually superior to *Macbeth* and the Michelangelo frescoes, as being more finished and perfect works of art: they aroused, it was explained, intenser "aesthetic emotions." Art thus satisfactorily disposed of, religion was next "explained" in terms of sex. The moral conscience was abolished (another illusion) and "amuse yourself" proclaimed as the sole categorical imperative. The theories of Freud were received in intellectual circles with acclaim; to explain every higher activity of the human mind in terms of incest and coprophily came to be regarded not

only as truly scientific, but also as somehow virile and courageous. Freudism became the *realpolitik* of psychology and philosophy. Those who denied values felt themselves to be rather heroic; instinctively they were appealing to the standards which they were trying, intellectually, to destroy.

Meanwhile the men of science are finding that the crude materialism of their predecessors is a hypothesis that will not work. Our apostles of scientific truth find themselves the apostles of what will soon be universally regarded as a fallacy.

But the influence of these *ci-devant* "scientific" deniers of value has not been wide. In most human beings the intuitive sense of values is too strong to be seriously affected by intellectual arguments, however specious. They are revolted by the denial of values; they insist on interpreting the world in terms of high and low. Unfortunately, however, they are apt to make mistakes and to call things by the wrong names, labelling "high" what should rightly be low, and "low" what ought to be high. This falsification of the standard of values is a product, in our modern world, of democracy, and has gone farthest in America. It is much more dangerous than the mere denial of values, because it is much more popular. To most men and women the denial of values is horrible; but the falsification of them so as to square with democratic prejudices is pleasant and flattering. Let us examine Mr. Kalbsfleisch's advertisement and try to discover the direction in which standards have been perverted and the methods of falsification employed.

The democratic hypothesis in its extreme and most popular form is that all men are equal and that I am just as good as you are. It is so manifestly untrue that a most elaborate system of humbug has had to be invented in order to render it credible to any normally sane human being. Nowhere has this system of humbug been brought to such perfection as in America. Take the case of Mr. Kalbsfleisch. He is an un-

dertaker. The trade he practises has never enjoyed great esteem; for, although it is a necessary trade, it cannot be said to call for high intellectual or moral qualities in its practitioners. Mr. Kalbsfleisch and his fellows have realised and resented this failure on the part of humanity to esteem them. Being good democrats, they want to insist on their equality with the admittedly best people. They begin by altering the name of their trade. The word "undertaker" has base associations. They therefore coin a new locution and style themselves "morticians." "Mortician" is a word that rhymes with such highly reputable words as physician, mathematician, academician, politician — not to mention Titian. What's in a name? Much. From having been undertakers and mere tradesmen, the morticians have become artists and members of an almost learned profession.

Having emended their name, the morticians proceed to exalt and magnify their calling. They do this in a very simple, but eminently effective way: by insisting on the Service which they render to Humanity.

The notion of Service is fundamental to Christianity. Jesus and his greatest followers have proclaimed the spiritual importance of Service and have exhorted all men and women to be the servants of their fellows. The morticians, and with them all the Business Men of America, are as whole-heartedly enthusiastic about Service as was ever St. Francis or his divine Master. But the activities which they designate by the word "Service" happen to be slightly different from those which the Founder of Christianity called by the same name. For Jesus and St. Francis, Service connoted self-sacrifice, abnegation, humility. For the morticians and other American Business Men, Service means something else; it means doing profitable business efficiently and with just sufficient honesty to keep out of jail. American Business Men talk like St. Francis; but their activities are indistinguishable from those of the money-changers and the sellers of

doves whom Jesus expelled from the Temple with a whip of small cords.

The money-changers and the bird-hawkers protested, no doubt, that they were serving humanity as well as, and even better than, their aggressor. "What we do," they must have argued, "is useful and necessary; society finds us indispensable." It is on the same ground — that they perform necessary jobs well — that American Business Men claim to be doing Service, and Service of the highest value. They overlook the significant historical fact that all the valuable things in life, all the things that make for civilization and progress, are precisely the unnecessary ones. All scientific research, all art, all religion are (by comparison with making coffins or breakfast foods) unnecessary. But if we had stuck to the merely necessary, we should still be apes. According to any proper standard of values, the unnecessary things and the unnecessary people who are concerned with them are much more important than the necessary ones. By exalting the merely necessary to an equality with the unnecessary, the American Business Man has falsified the standard of values. The service rendered by a mortician or a realtor has come to be regarded as the equivalent of the service rendered by an artist or a man of science. Babbitt can now honestly believe that he and his kind are doing as much for humanity as the Pasteurs and the Isaac Newtons. Kalbsfleisch among his silk-lined caskets knows himself to be as good as Beethoven. Successful stockbrokers, certain that Business is Religion, can come home after a day of speculation on the Exchange, feeling as virtuously happy as Buddha must have felt when he had renounced the world and received his great illumination.

In every part of the world and at all times the vast majority of human beings has consisted of Babbitts and peasants. They are indispensable; the necessary work must be done. But never, except at the present time, and nowhere

but in America, have the necessary millions believed themselves the equals of the unnecessary few. In Europe the ancient standards still persist, the ghost at least of the old hierarchy survives. The rich parvenu may despise the man of science for his poverty; but he still feels humble before his knowledge, his superior intelligence and his disinterestedness. That technique of humbug, by the employment of which successful stockbroking may be made to seem as valuable and noble an occupation as scientific research or artistic creation, has not yet been perfected in Europe, it has hardly been invented. True, there are many people who would like to see the technique introduced, ready-made and perfected, from across the Atlantic. I trust, and I am even moderately confident, that they will be for ever disappointed.

Meanwhile, on the Western side of the Atlantic the progressive falsification of values steadily continues. So far, what has happened is this: preciousness has been attributed to things and people previously regarded as possessing small value. But in certain parts of the Union the innumerable necessary men are preparing to move a step farther. Not content with attributing the highest possible value to themselves, they are denying it to the unnecessary few; the majority has sovereign rights. What was previously held to be high is now being disparaged. The mental and moral qualities, the occupations and diversions of the greatest number are regarded as the best, the sole permissible; the qualities and occupations of the few are condemned. Stupidity, suggestibility and business are held up as supremely precious. Intelligence, independence and disinterested activity — once admired — are in process of becoming evil things which ought to be destroyed. In Tennessee and other remote provinces the crusade against them has already begun. It remains to be seen whether this further preversion of values will affect the rest of the continent.

POETRY AND PHILOSOPHY

JOHN DEWEY

In an essay printed earlier in this volume, Matthew Arnold distinguishes between literature and science in their importance for the education of the ordinary man and virtually claims for poetry a power superior to science and philosophy in its influence on the moral and spiritual life of humanity. The question raised by Mr. John Dewey is whether Arnold's division of human activity into a number of distinct faculties is either sound or valuable. Mr. Dewey is at present looked upon as the most characteristic and most important philosopher produced by America. He has had an enormous influence on the practice of education — particularly of elementary education — not only in the United States but in Europe as well. The essay on "Poetry and Philosophy" was written early in his career, before his distinctive conceptions were fully formulated, nevertheless one finds in it a reflection of the outlook associated with his maturity. Life according to Mr. Dewey is a process of continuous adjustment, and success in life depends on the integration of the variety of interests which it offers in relation to some end that is considered humanly desirable. To Arnold's argument that science, because it is bare of emotional appeal, can exercise no sway over the heart and imagination of man, Mr. Dewey replies that no poetry will have a serious influence that is not capable of being verified to the intelligence, that is not in harmony with the truth or the system of truths held by its readers. What Mr. Dewey means by science and philosophy is the degree of understanding which we have of the world in which we live, and poetry is merely the exercise of our emotions and our imagination in the interpretation of its meaning. To separate poetry from science, therefore, is to deprive the former of its reality and to create an "unnatural divorce of the spirit." How faithfully serious poetry expresses the poet's conception of *the reality of things* Mr. Dewey tries

to illustrate from the writings of Arnold himself and from the poetry of Robert Browning.

Complaint is often made of Mr. Dewey's obscure or "fuzzy" style. If we were to assume that the complaint is sometimes justified, we should have to infer, from the lucidity and precision of expression in this essay, that his writing must have suffered in its effort to attain systematic rigor. (*Poetry and Philosophy* was first published in the *Andover Review*, August, 1891, and was reprinted with the title *Matthew Arnold and Robert Browning* in *Characters and Events*, 1929.)

POETRY AND PHILOSOPHY*

The future of poetry is immense, because in poetry our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay. There is not a creed which is not shaken; not an accredited dogma which is not shown to be questionable; not a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve. Our religion has materialized itself in the fact, in the supposed fact; it has attached its emotion to the fact, and now the fact is failing it. But for poetry the idea is everything. . . . Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea, the idea *is* the fact. . . . More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry. — MATTHEW ARNOLD.

"NOT a creed unshaken," "not a dogma unquestioned, every tradition threatening to dissolve,"—this is Matthew Arnold's counterphrase to Carlyle's "Our relations all an inquiry and a doubt." In a world of disintegrated intelligence and a broken authority, Arnold sees men more and more turning to poetry for consolation, for stay, for interpretation. There is absence of any coherent social faith and order; there is doubt whether any theory of life at once valuable and verifiable, true to intelligence and worthy to the emotion, is any longer possible, and yet there is also demand for authority and for instruction. We may say science is verifiable, but it lacks sympathy, consolation, humanity; it does not afford instruction where instruction is most wanted,—in the ordering of life. What once afforded

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all this, says Mr. Arnold, has lost its hold as truth; it no longer appeals verifiably to us. This is the difficulty of the situation: the true does not inspire, does not aid; that which once gave stay and interpretation is no longer true. In poetry men find a wide interpretation of life, noble ideas about life, and also a kind sympathy with all its colored moods, with all phases of its movement. Keen feeling, wide sympathy, noble ideas, serious emotion, are found there. What more do we want? What more natural than, in the difficulty of our times, men turning to poetry for guidance? We may well believe that poetry is more and more becoming our religion and our philosophy. Here, let us also add, there is no need to ask if this or that be scientifically true. "For poetry the idea is everything; all else is illusion. For poetry the idea is the fact."

We have the thought of Matthew Arnold before us. What shall we say of it? Shall we make bold to criticise the position? Spite of the clear insight of this great critic, shall we venture to say that his insight was essentially limited in range? that he saw but a small part of the forces really at work in modern thought?

We need not be detained by what our critic says regarding the existing disintegration of intellectual authority in matters of belief. Making allowance for overstatement, all will admit readily that there is enough of unrest, enough of doubt in modern thought, to make it worth while to raise this question, Where shall we find authority, the instruction which our natures demand? Shall we cease to find it in philosophy, or in science, and shall we find it in poetry?

I think none desire that poetry shall not be more and more the vehicle of serious thought and ennobling emotion, that it shall not more and more convey genuine and helpful interpretation of life. *Absit omen.* We have fallen too much on days of trivial subjects, ornate treatment, cheap senti-

ment, and artificial imagery not to sympathize with all that Mr. Arnold says about the high calling of poetry. We cannot too often return to the idea that its purpose is to deepen the sense of what is worthy, of what is permanent in life. The question only presses the more earnestly: How is poetry to interpret valuable meanings of life, how to animate to the execution of them; how is it to be kept from the evils that threaten it, from the frivolous, the sensual, the artificial? Can it do all this, if it is not backed and sustained by something which commends itself to the intelligence? Call this something what you will, theology, philosophy, or theory of life, how can poetry preserve its genuineness and its sustaining force, if it cut loose from all verifiable account of the universe? Who shall keep the keeper? I know of but one answer. Truth, and truth alone, can do this. And I confess I do not understand how that can be true for the imagination, for the emotions, which is not also true for intelligence.

It is easy to disparage science, it is easy to laugh at philosophy, with its "reasoning about causation and finite and infinite being." Both are remote enough from our immediate spiritual and ethical interests. Face to face with the supreme question concerning the right ordering of life they seem ludicrously insufficient. But, after all, science means only knowledge,—philosophy, only love of wisdom, only the essay at reaching the meaning of this experience of ours. I cannot believe that the attempt to know truth, to grasp the meaning of experience, is remote from conduct, from the ideals and aspirations of life. In the words of Carlyle, I verify my own conviction: "Belief, indeed, is the beginning and first condition of all spiritual force whatsoever; only so far as imagination is *believed* can there be any use or even any enjoyment of it." The imagination rests upon belief; it is from belief that it gets its cue to stay, to interpret, its consolation. If there is belief in the high and serious values

of the universe, with what glory shall not the imagination portray and inspire life, what consolations shall not issue from it! But let intelligence lose this belief in the meaning and worthiness of experience, and poetry is but the tricking out of illusions, the devising of artifices. I can well comprehend that poetry may deliver truth with a personal and a passionate force which is beyond the reach of theory painting in gray on gray. Indeed, it is the emotional kindling of reality which is the true province of poetry.

Astronomers tell us that meteors are cold rock, cold as the frozen emptiness of space, molten by contact with our earthly atmosphere, and thence glowing like the stars. Thus do I conceive of poetry. The graceless, rigid, dark facts of science, of philosophy, pass through the atmosphere of personality, of the hopes and fears of a human soul, and issue illumined and to illuminate. Without the basis of fact, of fact verifiable by science, our light is a will-o'-the-wisp, a wandering flame generated in the stagnant marshes of sentiment. In a word, there must be the possibility of science and philosophy to criticise, to verify. Poets are indeed seers and makers; but if what they make has matter, has weight, if what they see is more than shadow, the poets must reveal, they must round out to high completeness, the meaning of the life that is about them. Poets cannot be freed from the conditions which attach to the intelligence of man everywhere. The poet and the ploughman gaze at the same scene, only the eyes of one are holden. If the life which the poet presents to us as throbbing, as pregnant, ever new from God, is other than the genuine revelation of the ordinary day-by-day life of man, it is but dainty foolery or clumsy masquerading. If life is, indeed, dull and blank and unappealing, poetry will be depressing, mechanical, merely decorative. If life is abundant, promising, endless, poetry will be spontaneous, buoyant, passionate; it will have enjoyment. If

life carries meaning with it, fulfills purpose, makes exactions which are opportunities, poetry will be high-minded, a power to stay and to console.

Nor is this all. What life is found to be depends in large measure upon the prevailing theory of life, upon the interpretation of it which commends itself to the intelligence. Life is not a raw, unworked material to which the poet may directly apply himself. As it comes to the poet, life is already a universe of meanings, of interpretations, which indeed the poet may fill out, but not dispense with. For good or for ill, centuries of reflective thought have been interpreting life, and their interpretations remain the basis and furnish the instrument for all the poet may do; he may simply use the assimilated results of the labors of scientific men and philosophers. Let the philosophy of a time be materialistic, mechanical, and the poetry of that time is artificial and unworthy. If the poet succeeds in rising above the thought that has taken possession of contemporary life, it is because by instinct or by desire he falls back on the larger and freer ideas of an earlier day. If the ideas of a time breathe the solemn atmosphere of a divine order, if they find reality surcharged with meaning, we can imagine the poetry that results. It is the poetry of Homer, of Dante, of Shakespeare. If the philosophy of a time is agnostic, if it utters a scorn of life as it seems to be, that philosophy will also sound its note in the poetry of its day.

Thus we are brought again to our starting-point. If we are correct in our judgment that a poet must draw his sustenance from the intelligence of his time, the poetry of to-day must feel the touch of what we call our agnosticism, and the poets of to-day must be somewhat moved by this trait of contemporary life.

Are they thus moved? What is their attitude toward the agnosticism, the doubt, the pessimism, of the present day?

I wish now to speak in this relation of two poets who have recently passed from us. One of them is Mr. Arnold himself, poet as well as critic; the other is Mr. Robert Browning. How do these, both serious and high-minded poets, stand affected by the popular philosophy? How do they affect us who go to them to learn of life?

Nothing in Arnold the poet strikes us more than the teaching of Arnold the critic. Translated from the impersonal narrative of prose into the warmth of poetry, it is the same lesson. Compare the passage standing as our text with this:—

> "Wandering between two worlds, one dead
> The other powerless to be born,
> With nowhere yet to lay my head,
> Like them, on earth I wait forlorn."

Or with this:—

> "The sea of faith
> Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
> Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled:
> But now I only hear
> Its melancholy long withdrawing roar."

Indeed, Arnold's distinguishing sign among modern poets is the melancholy beauty with which he has voiced the sense of loss; his sad backward glance at the departure of old faiths and ideals; the brooding memories of joys whose spring has fallen away; the shapeless, hopeless hope for the dawn of a new joy, new faith.

I should say that the source of regret which expires from Arnold's lines is his consciousness of a twofold isolation of man—his isolation from nature, his isolation from fellow-man. No longer, he seems to say, may man believe in his oneness with the dear nature about him: the sense of a common spirit binding them together has vanished; the

sense of a common purpose outworking in both has fled. Nature, in ceasing to be divine, has ceased to be human. The faith that one idea, one fulfillment, unites in cherished bonds man to nature, is no more; in its stead, the consciousness of isolation. There is still, indeed, grateful companionship with nature, but below this companionship is the knowledge of an impassable gulf:—

> "Thou hast been, shalt be, art alone:
> Or, if not quite alone, yet they
> Who touch thee are unmating things, —
> Ocean and clouds, and night and day,
> Lorn autumns and triumphant springs."

The companionship is not at bottom real: it is only on man's side; Nature lacks the element of purpose which alone could give joyful response to man's needs. Man solaces and strengthens his spirit by recourse to Nature, but Nature goes her own way and man must return to his; strengthened and solaced, indeed, but only that he may live self-poised like Nature, careless, unheeding of all beyond self. Companionship no longer is rooted in the heart of things; it is no longer the outcome of a single life.

Man, repulsed from the intimacy of communion with Nature, may turn to man for fellowship; but here, too, is found isolation:—

> "Like drift-wood spars which meet and pass
> Upon the boundless ocean plain,
> So on the sea of life, alas!
> Man meets man, meets and parts again."

No reader of Arnold can fail to notice how spontaneously he takes his most characteristic metaphor from the sea and the matters of the sea. The verses I am about to quote have the same inspiration and tell the same story. As the islands of the sea are separated by that sea which is common to

them all, so men are separated by that very life in which all share. Between them is

> "The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea."

> "Yes, on the sea of life enisled,
> With echoing straits between us thrown,
> We mortal millions live alone."

I am aware, however, of no passage of Arnold's which comes to us so laden with the gospel of the isolation of life as that poem which gives us his reading of history, "Obermann Once More." The sad tone reaches its highest note in the description of the loss of Christian faith. From the land whence once came the words of humanity's life,—

> "Ah, from that silent, sacred land
> Of sun and arid stone,
> And crumbling wall and sultry sand,
> Comes now *one* word alone!
> From David's lips that word did roll,
> 'Tis true and living yet:
> No man can save his brother's soul,
> Nor pay his brother's debt.
> Alone, self-poised, henceforward man
> Must labor."

Not from him who identified himself with the woe and the joy of all men's lives, but from David, sounds the final word of Palestine. The life of common brotherhood, struggle and destiny of Christianity has given way to the old isolated struggle of the individual.

> "No man can save his brother's soul
> Nor pay his brother's debt."

That is, I take it, the last word of Arnold's poetic message, his last interpretation of life. Perhaps I should rather say

this is the keynote of it all. To say it is the last is to say his last message is one of weakness and despair. Contrary to this, the philosophy which Mr. Arnold leaves us is one of endeavor, of strenuous, almost buoyant, endeavor, in spite of the fact that this endeavor must spring from sadness. If man is isolated, in that isolation he may find himself, and, finding himself, living his own life, lose all his misery. Although man may not commune with Nature, he may yet follow and repeat her. If the works of Nature go on,

> "Bounded by them-elves, and unregardful
> In what state God's other works may be,"

man should emulate this self-sufficient energy. Isolation is translated into self-dependence. Separation throws man farther into himself, deepens his consciousness of his own destiny and of his own law. The verses which close the poem called "Youth of Man," while far from the most poetical of his lines, sum up, I think, his interpretation of life:—

> "Sink, O youth, in thy soul!
> Yearn to the greatness of nature;
> Rally th good in the depths of thyself."

This is the outcome of the loneliness of life. Regret and melancholy are not the final fruit. Obey nature, go thy way, heeding nothing less than the concerns of men. As a consolation for thy loneliness, yearn to the greatness of nature. Is man helpless to save another's soul? Then all the more let him rally the good in the depths of himself!

How does this message stand related to the dictum of Arnold that poetry is to take the place of philosophy, of theology? How does it stand related to our dictum that the interpretation of life which poetry gives us must be parallel to the demonstrations of philosophy? I do not know how any one can apprehend the message uttered by Arnold and

not feel its heart and substance to be that reflective and philosophic interpretation of life given by one school of the world's great moralists,—by the Stoics. As surely as Arnold's style, his deftness, his delicacy, his simplicity testify to the influence of Virgil, of Æschylus, of Homer, so surely do his ideas and their substance testify to Marcus Aurelius and to Epictetus and to Kant. I do not mean by this that Arnold has put the "Meditations" or the "Critique of Practical Reason" into verse. I do not even imagine that Arnold had much acquaintance with Kant, or was attracted by such as he had. Speaking broadly, however, the ideas of the Stoics, of Kant, and of Matthew Arnold, grow out of the same soil. There is in all three the conception of the individual as shut off from real communion with nature and with fellow-man, and yet as bearing in himself a universal principle.

> "And thou, thou lonely heart,
> Which never yet, without remorse,
> Even for a moment didst depart
> From thy remote and spherèd course
> To haunt the place where passions dwell,
> Back to thy solitude again."

This is precisely in the sense of Epictetus, precisely in the vein of Kant. I would not, however, insist upon detailed likeness in special points. What is alike in all is the underlying spirit, the attitude towards life. The individual flung back from the world and from society upon himself, and within himself finding the secret of a new strength, the source of a new consolation,—this is the interpretation of life common to all. How can such an interpretation have use, have enjoyment, be a consolation, be a stay in poetry, and yet have no legitimacy in theory? What alembic does the poet possess that he may apply ideas to life with the

assurance that in poetry the ideas are the fact, while the same ideas in the hands of the philosopher are unverifiable, discredited dogmas, shaken creeds, or failing traditions? I cannot rid myself of the conviction that the weight and the humanity of the message of the poet are proportionate to the weighty and human ideas which he develops; that these ideas must be capable of verification to the intelligence,—must be true in that system of knowledge which is science, in that discussion of the meaning of experience which is philosophy.

But what if Mr. Arnold's interpretation of life be partial? What if a completer account of experience, a deeper and more adventurous love of wisdom, should find community below all isolation? Would not the philosophy of life which revealed this limitation of Mr. Arnold's interpretation, reveal also the limitation of his poetry? This is the question that comes to me when I put Mr. Arnold's poetry, with all its nobility, beside the poetry of Robert Browning.

What a change from a serene yet cold air of one to the genial, glowing atmosphere of the other, which envelops and embraces everything in this world of ours as if in fear that something might escape its loving touch. What a change from the pallid colors in which one paints life to the varied warmth of the other! What a change from the almost remote and academic sympathies of the one to the passionate human sympathies of the other! Where Arnold finds food for pensive regret, a rendering of triumphant hope is borne to us from Browning. When the world tells a story of softened melancholy to Arnold, Browning reads a tale of keen and delicious joy. If Arnold sings of calm, self-poised resignation and endeavor, the trumpet peal of an abounding life bursts from Browning. Arnold stands upon the sandy, barren shore of the vast ocean where is seen only "the turbid ebb and flow of human misery," whence comes only the

melancholy sound of a withdrawing faith. Browning takes his place on this homely, every-day earth of ours:—

> "Do I stoop? I pluck a posey.
> Do I stand and stare? All's blue."

Strenuous, abounding, triumphant optimism,—that is the note of Browning:—

> "How good is man's life, the men living! how fit to employ
> All the heart and the soul and the senses forever in joy! "

Buoyant faith, that is the attitude of Browning:—

> "God's in his heaven!
> All's right with the world! "

What is the source of this note in Browning, what the authority for his attitude? It is only when we go to his ideas, the ideas which he applies to life, by which he criticises and interprets life, that we get the secret of his superior passion, of his superior joy, of his superior sympathy. An adequate rendering of Browning's conception of the meaning of life does not come within the scope of this article. The most inadequate rendering cannot fail to note that Browning knows and tells of no isolation of man from nature, of man from man. No account, however brief, can fail to record the abundance, the intensity, the vibrating fullness, the impassioned sanity of his verse, basing themselves upon the realization that the world was made for man, and that man was made for man:—

> "This world's no blot for us,
> No blank. It means intensely and means good."

This is the uniform utterance of Browning.

> "Such a soul,
> Such a body, and then such an earth,
> For ensphering the whole! "

"The earth's first stuff
Was neither more nor less, enough
To house man's soul, man's need fulfill."

"How the world is made for each of us!
All we perceive and know in it
Tends to some moment's product thus
When the soul declares itself."

In these verses we have the epitome of Browning's interpretation of life: the subordination of earth to man, to a common self. Just that which was conspicuously absent in Arnold is conspicuously present in Browning,—the sense of a common idea, a common purpose in nature and in man. Thus it is man need not simply look to nature for encouragement in bearing the burden of the world, for strength to be like her, self-poised, self-dependent. Man may rejoice in her every pulse of life, having the conviction that in her life he, too, lives; knowing that her every event furthers some need of his, knowing that her beauty is the response to some aspiration of his. Let one know, as Browning sings in "Rabbi Ben Ezra," that nature, that the earthly life, and all "this dance of plastic circumstance," are but the machinery to shape the soul, to form the spirit; are but the potter's wheel that moulds the clay to "heaven's consummate cup"; let him know that the meaning of life, the "uses of the cup," are

"The festal board, lamp's flash, and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The master's lips aglow! " —

let him know all this, and he will understand why the song of Browning is one of joy and victory.

Add to this Browning's conception of the relation of man to man. Consider how he finds in the contacts of life, not

isolation, but companionship, service, love,—the first and the last word.

To relate how he finds, in the minglings of life and life, the secret and the key to our experience, would be to summarize, one by one, his poems. Even a casual acquaintance with Browning suffices to show that love, as he conceives it, is no accident and no mere occurrence of the life-journey, but at once its path and its goal. Everything

> "Of power and beauty in the world
> The mightiness of love is curled
> Inextricably round about.
> Love lies within it and without."

We are led again to our old question. The greater vigor and sensuousness of Browning, his wider range, his more human touch, all spring from the ideas through which he sees and interprets life. But are the ideas true? Are they verifiable? Are they sporadic outbursts of a fancy which has no root in the nature of things, or are they the revelations of an imagination which is but another name for insight? If the ideas which give both substance and shape to Browning's poetry are only artificial make-ups of his individual fancy, what claim have they even for serious attention, to say nothing of power to stay by and to uphold? If these ideas are not ideas of soberness and of truth, as well as of fancy and passion, they are no more to us (the harsh word must be said) than freaks of a madman's brain.

If Mr. Arnold's message has weight and penetration with us, it is because that message conveys something of the reality of things. If there are messages, in comparison with which Mr. Arnold's seems pallid and academic, it is only because these other messages bring us word from a more abiding, a more human world than Mr. Arnold had known. The great power of poetry to stay and to console—a power

which neither Arnold nor any other critic can exaggerate one whit—is just because of the truth, the rendering of the reality of affairs, which poetry gives us. The importance and the endurance of poetry, as of all art, are in its hold upon reality. We hear much, on this side and that, of realism. Well, we may let realism go, but we cannot let go reality. Here, too, we may turn to Robert Browning himself:—

> "Truth, truth, that's the gold. And all the good
> I find in fancy is, it serves to set
> Gold's inmost glint free."

It is because, amid the conventionalities and make-believes of our ordinary life, poetry flashes home to us some of the gold which is at the very heart and core of our every-day existence, that poetry has its power to sustain us, its sympathy to enhearten us. Now science and philosophy, I repeat, however technical and remote in form and method, are the workings of the one selfsame spirit in its communing with this same world. There are, indeed, diversities of operation. And if the advantage in directness and universality of appeal, in wealth and passionateness of garb, is upon the side of poetry, let us remember that, after all, the advantage upon the side of method and standard are with the side of science and philosophy.

Indeed, this present separation of science and art, this division of life into prose and poetry, is an unnatural divorce of the spirit. It exists and endures, not because of a glow to life which philosophy cannot catch, nor because of a verifiable truth which poetry cannot convey. It exists because in the last few centuries the onward movement of life, of experience, has been so rapid, its diversification of regions and methods so wide, that it has outrun the slower step of reflective thought. Philosophy has not yet caught the rhythmic swing of this onward movement, and written it down in a

score of black and white which all may read. Or if in some degree philosophy has laid hold of the secret of this movement, it has not yet been able to tell it in straightforward, simple syllables to the common consciousness. In its own theory, this common consciousness tells by rote a doctrine of an earlier and outworn world. But this movement, which has so escaped the surer yet heavier tread of critical thought, has in manifold ways danced itself into the poetic measures of our century. The deeper and wider spiritual life which makes this movement has found an expression in Wordsworth and Shelley, in Browning and in Mr. Arnold himself, which has, as yet, been denied to it in English philosophy. That which seemed to Mr. Arnold a flight from philosophy into poetry was in reality but a flight from a hard and partial philosophy to a fuller and freer one. It is not because poetry is divorced from science that it gave Mr. Arnold's nature such satisfaction, but because his philosophic instinct was so deep and real that he revolted from the professional philosophy of the day as he found it in Great Britain, and sought refuge in the unnamed, unprofessed philosophy of the great poets of England and of all time.

Here, indeed, is just our problem. We must bridge this gap of poetry from science. We must heal this unnatural wound. We must, in the cold, reflective way of critical system, justify and organize the truth which poetry, with its quick, naïve contacts, has already felt and reported. The same movement of the spirit, bringing man and man, man and nature, into wider and closer unity, which has found expression by anticipation in poetry, must find expression by retrospection in philosophy. Thus will be hastened the day in which our sons and our daughters shall prophesy, our young men shall see visions, and our old men dream dreams.

THE NEW MORALITY

PAUL ELMER MORE

No American critic, living or dead, has produced a larger body of serious criticism based on a more solid learning than has Mr. Paul E. More. Besides twelve volumes of collected literary and social studies (*Shelburne Essays*) he has in later life published half a dozen volumes on Platonism and early Christian philosophy. His work embodies a definite outlook on life and literature which has come to be called the New Humanism and which has, in recent years, after suffering a long period ot indifference, enlisted a considerable group of followers and grown extremely aggressive. With Professor Irving Babbitt of Harvard, Mr. More shares the titular leadership of this movement. He and his followers are disturbed by the demoralization of modern life, which they trace largely to a false view of human nature flowing from the romantic conceptions of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, particularly from the writings of Rousseau. To what they call the "expansive" principle of romanticism, they oppose the principles of restraint and control. Their teaching is rooted in the idea that there is in man something "superior to instinct and reason, some power that acts as a stay upon the flowing impulses of nature." This power they designate as "the inner check," though what its origin is and how it operates they do not profess to know. It is therefore natural that their thinking should take a mystical turn and occasionally look for its support to the revelation of traditional religion. Among the tendencies that they find particularly mischievous in modern society are what they call "sentimental democracy" and humanitarianism. The former they condemn as resting on a too easy faith in the natural goodness of the average man, whom they themselves are prone to think of as more richly equipped with natural evil. Their grievance against humanitarianism, which they consistently employ as a foil to their humanism, is that it takes away from men the

sense of individual responsibility and so allows no opportunity for the development of character. This forms the burden of Mr. More's complaint in his very characteristic essay on "The New Morality." A rigorous point of view maintained with such strictness is likely to alienate sympathy by its dogmatism, particularly when it opposes itself to prevailing popular tendencies. But the doctrine, whether or not we acquiesce in it as a doctrine, has its undoubted value as a moral tonic, and when it is backed with the learning, the seriousness, the ripe reflection, and the abundant stores of literary illustration of Mr. More, it should be given a respectful hearing. (*The New Morality* first appeared in *The Unpopular Review* and was reprinted in *Aristocracy and Justice*, the ninth volume of the *Shelburne Essays*, 1915.)

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SOME ten or twelve years ago a certain young woman, then fresh from the hands of an esteemed but erratic professor of English literature, wrote a novel the plot of which was roughly as follows. A college graduate suddenly finds himself the inheritor of a shoe factory in a New England town. Filled with the benevolent ideas absorbed in the academic contemplation of economics, he undertakes to introduce profit-sharing with his employees and otherwise to conduct his business for the benefit of the community. So far, good. But hard times follow, and his competitors by lowering wages and reducing labor are able to undersell him. Now there is in his control a considerable sum of money which a widow had entrusted to his father to invest for her, and the question arises whether he shall shut down his mills and inflict suffering upon his men, or shall divert this trust fund to his business and so try to tide over the period of stress. He yields to his sympathies and virtually embezzles the trust fund; but fails nevertheless, and with his own loss brings ruin upon the widow. The story was called *The Burden of Christopher*, with the implication that the hero was a bearer of Christ in his misfortune, and the author indicates pretty clearly her sentiment that in surrendering his personal integrity for the expected good of his working people he was following the higher of two conflicting codes of ethics.

The book no doubt has gone its own way to the "limbo

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large and broad," where the heroes of ancient fiction wander with

> Embrios and idiots, eremites and friars;

but it made a lasting impression on one reader at least as the first popular presentation to come under his notice of a theory which now confronts him wherever he turns his eyes. There has, in fact, been an astonishing divulgation in the past decade of what is called, with magnificent audacity, the New Morality.

Perhaps the most honored teacher of this code is the mistress of Hull House, who by her devoted life and her services to the people of Chicago in various times of need has won the right to speak with a certain authority for the striving generation of the day. And in one of her books, the *Newer Ideals of Peace*, Miss Addams tells of an actual occurrence and infers a moral which points in the same direction as the novel of *Christopher*. A family of five children is left motherless. The father, a drunkard, disappears, and the household is left to the care of a feeble old grandmother. Thereupon work is found for the oldest boy, "a fine, manly little fellow" of twelve, who feels keenly "his obligation to care for the family." But after a time he becomes "listless and indifferent," and at sixteen turns to professional tramping. "It was through such bitter lessons as these," observes Miss Addams, "we learned that good intentions and the charitable impulse do not always work for righteousness." As the story is told there is a plain implication that to find work for a boy under such circumstances is "cruel and disastrous" (her own comment), and that society, and not his own nature, was responsible for his relapse. One would suppose that scarcely an honest workman, or prosperous merchant, or successful professional man had ever taken up the burden of a family in youth or

childhood. Doubtless hardships and waste often come from the exigencies of life, but there is not a single word in Miss Addams' account to indicate that she has felt the need of developing in the future citizen a sensitiveness to the peculiar duties that will confront him, or has reflected on the evil that might have been done the boy if he had been relieved of his natural obligations and supported by society. "Our democracy," as she says with approval, "is making inroads upon the family, the oldest of human institutions."

This is not an isolated case in Miss Addams' works, nor does it in any wise misrepresent her. In another book, *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets*, the thesis is maintained and reiterated, that crime is for the most part merely the result of repressing a wholesome "love for excitement" and "desire for adventure." In the year 1909 "there were arrested and brought into court [in Chicago] fifteen thousand young people under the age of twenty, who had failed to keep even the common law of the land. Most of these young people had broken the law in their blundering efforts to find adventure." The inference to be drawn here and throughout the book is that one need only relieve the youth of the land from the necessity of "assuming responsibility prematurely," affording them meanwhile abundant amusement, and the instincts of lawlessness and the pursuit of criminal pleasure will vanish, or almost vanish, of themselves—as if there were no Harry Thaws and the sons of the rich were all virtuous.

But it must not be supposed that Hull House occupies a place of lonely isolation as the fountain of these ideas. From every self-authorized centre of civic virtue in which a type-writer is at work, the stream proceeds. The very presses groan, as we used to say when those machines were still in the mythological stage, at their labor of supplying the world with the new intellectual pabulum. At this moment there lies before the writer of this essay a pile of

books, all recently published, which are devoted more or less specifically to the subject, and from all of which, if he had courage to go through them, he might cull abundant examples and quotations. He was, indeed, about to enter this "hollow cave, amid the thickest woods," when, an unvaliant knight, he heard the warning of the lady Una:

> Yea but (quoth she) the perill of this place
> I better wot then you, though now too late
> To wish you backe returne with foule disgrace,
> Yet wisedome warnes, whilest foot is in the gate,
> To stay the steppe, ere forced to retrate.

We have in fact to deal with the consummation of a long and deep-seated revolution, and there is no better way to understand the true character of the movement than by turning aside a moment to glance at its historical sources. This attempt to find some basis of conduct to take the place of the older conception of personal integrity, as we see it exemplified in the works of Miss Jane Addams and a host of other modern writers, is in fact only one aspect of the slow drift from medieval religion to humanitarianism. For a thousand years and well into the second thousand the ethical feeling of Christian Europe may be said to have taken its color from the saying, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" —which in extreme cases was interpreted as if it read, If he *reform* the whole world; and on the other, kindred saying, "Sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me"—in which the command of charity was held to be not so much for the benefit of the poor as for the liberation of the giver's own soul from the powers of this world. Such was the law, and its binding force was confirmed by the conception of a final day of wrath when the souls of men

should stand before a merciless tribunal and be judged to everlasting joy or everlasting torment. The vivid reality of the fear that haunted men, at least in their moments of reflection, may be understood from the horrors of such a picture as Michael Angelo's *Last Judgment*, or from the meditations of one of the most genial of English cavaliers. In his little treatise on *Man in Darkness*—appropriate title—Henry Vaughan puts the frank question to himself:

> "And what madness then is it, for the enjoying of one minute's pleasure for the satisfaction of our sensual corrupt appetite, to lie forever in a bed of burning brass, in the lake of eternal and unquenchable fire? 'Suppose,' saith the same writer [Drexelius], 'that this whole globe of earth were nothing else but a huge mass or mountain of sand, and that a little wren came but once in every thousand years to fetch away but one grain of that huge heap; what an innumerable number of years would be spent before that world of sand could be so fetched away! And yet, alas! when the damned have lain in that fiery lake so many years as all those would amount to, they are no nearer coming out than the first hour they entered in.' "

No doubt practice and precept were at variance then, as to a certain extent they are at all times, and there were many texts in the Bible which might be taken to mitigate the harsher commands; but such in its purest, highest form was the law, and in the more sensitive minds this conception of the soul naked before a judging God must have created a tremendous anxiety. Morality was obedience and integrity; it scorned the world for an ideal of inner righteousness; it created a sense of individual responsibility for every word and deed; and, say what we will, there is something magnificent in this contempt for the reckoning of other men beside that eternal fame which

> . . . lives and speaks aloft by those pure eyes,
> And perfect witness of all-judging Jove.

But there was also in this law something repellent and even monstrous. Who has not shuddered with amazement at the inscription which Dante set over the portal of Hell: E 'L PRIMO AMORE? Was it Love that prepared those winding coils of torture to enclose for endless time the vast majority of mankind? Was it even justice to make the everlasting doom of a soul depend on its grasp of truth in these few years spent in a world of shadows and illusions? There is something repulsively irrational in the notion of an unchanging eternity suspended on the action in a moment of time—*ex hoc momento pendet æternitas*. It should seem to be unthinkable, if it had not actually been thought. As a matter of fact the rigor and crudity of this doctrine had been mitigated in the Middle Ages by the interposition between man and God of the very human institution of the Church, with its substitution of temporal penances and pardons and an interposed Purgatory in place of the terrible paradox of irrevocable judgment. It remained for the Reformation, and particularly for the Calvinistic Puritans, to tear away those veils of compromise and bring man face to face with the awful abstraction he had created. The result was for a while a great hardening and strengthening of character, salutary indeed after what may be called the almost hypocritical compromise of Catholicism; but in the end human nature could not endure the rigidity of its own logic, and in revolting turned not to another compromise but to questioning the very hypothesis of its faith.

The inevitable reaction from the intolerable logic of the Protestants was Deism, in which God was stript altogether of his judicial and moral attributes and reduced to a kind of immanent, all-benevolent force in nature. "But now comes a modern Sage," says Warburton of Bolingbroke, ". . . who tells us 'that they made the Basis of Religion far too wide; that men have no further concern with GOD than TO

BELIEVE THAT HE IS, which his *physical attributes* make fully manifest; but, that he is *a rewarder of them who diligently seek him*, Religion doth not require us to believe, since this depends on God's MORAL ATTRIBUTES, of which we have no conception.' " But the deistic position was manifestly untenable, for it left no place for the undeniable existence of evil in this world and life. From the unaccountable distribution of wrong and suffering the divine had argued the certainty of adjustment in a future state; the deist had flown in the face of facts by retaining the belief in a benevolent Providence while taking from it the power of supernatural retribution; the atheist was more logical, he denied the existence of Providence altogether and turned the universe over to chance or blind law. Such was the progress of thought from Baxter to Bolingbroke and from Bolingbroke to Hume.

The positive consequences of this evolution are written large in the literature of the eighteenth century. With the idea of an avenging deity and a supernatural test there disappeared also the sense of deep personal responsibility; the very notion of a radical and fundamental difference between good and evil was lost. The evil that is apparent in character comes to be regarded merely as the result of the restraining and thwarting institutions of society as these exist—why, no one can explain. Envy and jealousy and greed and the sheer lust of power, all those traits which were summed up in the single Greek word *pleonexia*, *the desire to have more*, are not inherent in the human heart, but are artificially introduced by property and a false civilization. Change these institutions or release the individual entirely from restrictions, and his nature will recoil spontaneously to its natural state of virtue. He needs only follow the impulse of his instinctive emotions to be sound and good. And as a man feels of himself, so he feels of others.

There is no real distinction between the good and the evil, but all are naturally good and the superficial variations we see are caused by the greater or less freedom of development. Hence we should condemn no man even as we do not condemn ourselves. There is no place for sharp judgment, and the laws which impose penalties and restrictions and set up false discriminations between the innocent and the criminal are subject to suspicion and should be made as flexible as possible. In place of judgment we are to regard all mankind with sympathy; a sort of emotional solidarity becomes the one great virtue, in which are included, or rather sunk, all the law and the prophets.

It was the great work of the eighteenth century, beginning in England and developing in France, to formulate this change and indoctrinate with it the mind of the unthinking masses. Here is not the place to follow the development in detail, and those who care to see its outcome may be referred to the keen and unjustly neglected chapters on the *philosophes* in La Harpe's *Lycée*. To those, indeed, who are acquainted with the philosophical writings that preceded and introduced the French Revolution, the epithet "new" as it is attached to our present-day morality may seem a bit presumptuous; for it would be difficult to find a single fundamental idea in current literature on this subject which could not be closely paralleled by a quotation from Rousseau, or Diderot, or Helvétius, or one of their compeers. Thus, in our exaltation of sympathy above judgment and of the unrestrained emotions generally as the final rule of character, we are but following Diderot's philosophy of the heart: "Les passions amorties dégradent les hommes extraordinaires"; and when we read in Ellen Key and a host of other feminist liberators the apotheosis of love as higher than any divine or human obligations, we are but meeting again with Toussaint's religion a little disguised:

"On aime de même Dieu et sa maîtresse." Our revolt from constitutional law as a power imposed by the slower reflection of men upon their own immediate desires and opinions is essentially the same as the restlessness consecrated by the French *économistes* in the phrase, "le despotisme légal." And, to return whence we began, the economics of Hull House flow only too easily from Helvétius' definition of virtue as "le désir du bien public," and from his more specific statement: "The integrity which is related to an individual or to a small society is not the true integrity; integrity considered in relation to the public is the only kind that really deserves and generally obtains the name."

Miss Addams herself has been disturbed by these reminiscences. Thus she quotes from one of the older humanitarians a characteristic saying: "The love of those whom a man does not know is quite as elemental a sentiment as the love of those whom a man does know," and repudiates it as vague and unpractical beside the New Morality. She ought to know, and may be right; yet it is not easy to see wherein her own ethics are any less vague when she deplores the act of a boy who goes to work for his starving grandmother because in doing so he is unfitting himself for future service to society. And as for effectiveness, it might seem that the French Revolution was a practical result fairly equivalent in magnitude to what has been achieved by our college settlements. But Miss Addams is by no means peculiar in this assumption of originality. Nothing is more notable in the humanitarian literature of the day than the feeling that our own age is severed from the past and opens an entirely new epoch in history. "*The race has now crossed the great divide of human history!*" exclaims an hysterical doctor of divinity in a book just published. "The tendency of the long past has been toward *diversity*, that of the longer future will be toward *oneness*. The change in this stream of tendency

is not a temporary deviation from its age-long course—a new bend in the river. It is an actual reversal of the current, which beyond a peradventure will prove permanent." To this ecstatic watcher the sudden reversal took place at no remote date, but yesterday; and by a thousand other watchers the same miracle is vociferously heralded. Beyond a peradventure! Not a little of this flattering assumption is due to the blind and passionate hope of the human heart clamoring against the voice of experience. So many prophets before now have cried out, looking at the ever-flowing current of time, and having faith in some Thessalian magic:

> Cessavere vices rerum.
> . . . Amnisque cucurrit
> Non qua pronus erat.

So often the world has been disappointed; but at last we have seen—beyond a peradventure. If the vicissitudes of fate have not ceased, yet at least we have learned to look with complacency on the very law of mutation from which the eyes of men had hitherto turned away in bewildered horror, at last the stream has turned back upon its sources, and change itself is carrying us no longer towards diversity, but towards the consummation of a divine oneness.

But it would equally be an error to insist too dogmatically on the continuity of the present-day movement with that of the eighteenth century; for one generation is never quite as another. We must not forget that for a hundred years or thereabout there was a partial reaction against the doctrines of the *philosophes*, during which time the terrors of the Revolution lay like a warning nightmare in the imagination of the more thoughtful men. A hundred years is a long period for the memory to bridge, particularly in a time when the historical sense has been weakened. Superficially, too, the application of the theory is in some respects different

from what it was; the law of social sympathy has been developed into different conceptions of socialism, and we have devised fresh schemes for giving efficacy to the immediate will of the people. Even deeper is the change that has come over the attitude of religious organizations towards the movement. In the age of the Revolution the Church, both Catholic and Protestant, was still strongly entrenched in the old beliefs and offered a violent resistance to the substitutions of humanitarianism for responsibility to the priest and to God. Now this last barrier has been almost swept away. Indeed, not the least remarkable feature of this literature is the number of clergymen who are contributing to it, with their constant appeal to the New Morality as the test of faith. Open one of these books before us—let us take *The Christian Reconstruction of Modern Life*, for the promise of its title—and you will be pretty likely to come upon such a passage as this: "Faith's fellowship with Jesus is one with the realization of our fellowship in humanity"; or, on another page: "If the fundamental of the true philosophy cannot be found by common men, what advantage in any man's finding it? If life's secret, direction, and power . . . is not attainable by the lowliest, then a man of this age, living in the social passion of our time, is forced to be indifferent to that which would be the monopoly of a few gifted souls." If such a social passion means anything, it means the reconstruction of life to the level of the gutter. It is the modern sham righteousness which would have called from Jesus the same utter scorn as that which he poured upon the Pharisaical cant of his own day. Yet it is not in religious books alone that you will meet with this sort of irreligion. For one sermon you will hear on the obligation of the individual soul to its Maker and Judge, and on the need of personal regeneration and the beauty of holiness, you will hear a score on the relation of a

man to his fellows and on the virtue of social sympathy. In effect, the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind," has been almost forgotten for the second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Worship in the temple is no longer a call to contrition and repentance, but an organized flattery of our human nature, and the theological seminary is fast becoming a special school for investigating poverty and spreading agnosticism. In this sense, or degree, that humanitarianism is no longer opposed by organized religion, but has itself usurped the place of the Church, the New Morality may really justify its name.

What are the results of this glorification of humanity? What does the New Morality mean in life and conduct? Well, of such matters it is wise to speak cautiously. The actual morals of an age are an extremely complicated and elusive network of facts, and it is only too easy to generalize from incomplete observation. On the other hand we must guard against allowing ourselves to be deceived by the fallacy everywhere heard, that, because the preacher has always, even from the remotest record of Egypt, bewailed his own times as degenerate, therefore no age has fallen off in morality from its predecessor. Such an argument is a complete *non-sequitur;* there have been periods of degeneration, and there may yet be. As for our own age, only a fool would dogmatize; we can only balance and surmise. And in the first place a certain good must almost certainly be placed to the credit of humanitarianism. It has softened us and made us quicker to respond to the sufferings of others; the direct and frightful cruelty that runs through the annals of history like a crimson line has been largely eliminated from civilization, and with it a good deal of the brutality of human nature. We sometimes hear the present age com-

pared with the later Roman Republic and the Empire, and in some respects speciously, but the callousness of the greater Romans to human misery and their hardness are almost unthinkable to-day. Consider a sentence or two from Appian: "The head and hand of Cicero were suspended for a long time from the rostra in the forum where formerly he had been accustomed to make public speeches, and more people came together to behold this spectacle than had previously come to listen to him. It is said that even at his meals Antony placed the head of Cicero before his table, until he became satiated with the horrid sight." Such an episode scarcely stands out from the hideous story of the Civil Wars; to the modern reader it brings a feeling almost of physical sickness. So much we seem to have gained, and the change in this respect even from our own seventeenth century shows that the credit is due in no small part to the general trend of humanitarianism.

But in other directions the progress is not so clear. Statistics are always treacherous witnesses, but so far as we can believe them and interpret them we can draw no comfort from the prevalence of crime and prostitution and divorce and insanity and suicide. At least, whatever may be the cause of this inner canker of society, our social passion seems to be powerless to cure it. Some might even argue that the preaching of any doctrine which minimizes personal responsibility is likely to increase the evil. Certainly a teacher who, like Miss Jane Addams, virtually attributes the lawless and criminal acts of our city hoodlums to a wholesome desire of adventure which the laws unrighteously repress, would appear to be encouraging the destructive and sensual proclivities which are too common in human nature, young and old. Nor are the ways of honesty made clear by a well-known humanitarian judge of Denver, who refused to punish a boy for stealing a Sunday-

School teacher's pocketbook, for the two good reasons, as his honor explained in a public address, "that the boy was not responsible, and, secondly, that there were bigger thieves in the pews upstairs." So, too, a respectable woman of New York who asks whether it may not be a greater wrong for a girl to submit to the slavery of low wages than to sell herself in the street, is manifestly not helping the tempted to resist. She is even doing what she can with her words to confuse the very bounds of moral and physical evil.

There is, in fact, a terrible confusion hidden in the New Morality, an ulcerous evil that is ever working inward. Sympathy creating the desire for even-handed justice, is in itself an excellent motive of conduct, and the stronger it grows, the better the world shall be. But sympathy, spoken with the word "social" prefixed, as it commonly is on the platforms of the day, begins to take on a dangerous connotation. And "social sympathy" erected into a theory which leaves out of account the responsibility of the individual and seeks to throw the blame of evil on the laws and on society, though it may effect desirable reforms here and there in institutions, is bound to leave the individual weakened in his powers of resistance against the temptations which can never be eliminated from human life. The whole effect of calling sympathy justice and putting it in the place of judgment is to relax the fibre of character and nourish the passions at the expense of reason and the will. And undoubtedly the conviction is every day gaining ground among cool observers of our life that the manners and morals of the people are beginning to suffer from this relaxation in many insidious ways apart from acts which come into the cognizance of the courts. The sensuality of the prevailing music and dancing, the plays that stir the country as organs of moral regeneration, the exaggeration of sex in the clothing seen in the street, are but symptoms more or less ominous

to our mind as we do or do not connect them with the regnant theory of ethics. And in the end this form of social sympathy may itself quite conceivably bring back the brutality and cruelty from which it seems to have delivered us. The Roman who gloated over the head of his and the people's enemy lived two thousand years ago, and we think such bloodthirstiness is no longer possible in public life. Yet not much more than a century ago the preaching of social sympathy could send a Lebon and his kind over France with an insatiable lust for killing, complicated with Sadism, while in Paris the leader of the government of the most civilized country of Europe was justifying such a régime on the pious principle that, "when the sovereign people exercises its power, we can only bow before it; in all it does is virtue and truth, and no excess, error, or crime is possible." The animal is not dead within us, but only asleep. If you think he has been really conquered, read what he has been doing in Congo and to the Putumayo Indians, or among the redeemers of the Balkan States. Or if you wish to get a glimpse of what he may yet do under the spur of social sympathy, consider the callous indifference shown by the labor unions to the revelation, if it deserves the name, of the system of dynamiting and murder employed in the service of "class-consciousness." These things are to be taken into account, not as bugbears, for society at large is no doubt sound at heart and will arouse itself at last against its false teachers, but as symptoms to warn and prepare.

To some few the only way out of what seems a state of moral blindness is through a return to an acknowledgment of the responsibility of the individual soul to its Maker and inflexible Judge. They may be right. Who can tell what reversal of belief may lie before us or what religious revolution may be preparing in the heart of infidelity? But for

the present, at least, that supernatural control has lost its general efficacy and even from the pulpit has only a slight and intermittent appeal. Nor does such a loss appear without its compensations when we consider the harshness of medieval theology or the obliquities of superstition that seem to be inherent in the purest of religions. Meanwhile, the troubled individual, whatever his scepticism may be, need not be withheld from confirming his moral faith by turning from the perverted doctrine of the "Enlightenment" and from its recrudescence in modern humanitarianism to a larger and higher philosophy. For there is a faith which existed long before the materialism of the eighteenth century and before the crude earlier anthropomorphism, and which persisted unchanged, though often half-concealed, through those ages and still persists as a kind of shamefaced inheritance of truth. It is not necessary to go to ancient books to recover that faith. Let a man cease for a moment to look so strenuously upon what is right for his neighbors. Let him shut out the voices of the world and disregard the stream of informing books which pour upon him from the modern press, as the "floud of poyson" was spewed upon Spenser's Knight from "Errours den":

> Her fruitful cursed spawne of serpents small.

Let him retire into himself, and in the silence of such recollection examine his own motives and the sources of his self-approval and discontent. He will discover there in that dialogue with himself, if his abstraction is complete and sincere, that his nature is not simple and single, but dual, and the consequences to him in his judgment of life and in his conduct will be of incalculable importance. He will learn, with a conviction which no science or philosophy falsely so-called can shake, that beside the passions and

wandering desires and blind impulses and the cravings for pleasure and the prod of sensations there is something within him and a part of him, rather in some way his truer self, which controls and checks and knows and pronounces judgment, unmoved amid all motion, unchanged amid continual change, of everlasting validity above the shifting valuations of the moment. He may not be able to express this insight in terms that will satisfy his own reason or will convince others, but if his insight is true he will not waver in loyalty to it, though he may sin against it times without number in spoken word and impulsive deed. Rather, his loyalty will be confirmed by experience. For he will discover that there is a happiness of the soul which is not the same as the pleasure of fulfilled desires, whether these be for good or for ill, a happiness which is not dependent upon the results of this or that choice among our desires, but upon the very act itself of choice and self-control, and which grows with the habit of staying the throng of besetting and conflicting impulses always until the judicial *fiat* has been pronounced. It is thus that happiness is the final test of morality, bringing with it a sense of responsibility to the supernatural command within the soul of the man himself, as binding as the laws of religion and based on no disputable revelation or outer authority. Such a morality is neither old nor new, and stands above the varying customs of society. It is not determined essentially by the relation of a man to his fellows or by their approval, but by the consciousness of rightness in the man's own breast,—in a word, by character. Its works are temperance, truth, honesty, trustworthiness, fortitude, magnanimity, elevation; and its crown is joy.

Then, under the guidance of this intuition, a man may turn his eyes upon the world with no fear of being swayed by the ephemeral winds of doctrine. Despite the clamor of

the hour he will know that the obligation to society is not the primal law and is not the source of personal integrity but is secondary to personal integrity. He will believe that social justice is in itself desirable, but he will hold that it is far more important to preach first the responsibility of each man to himself for his own character. He will admit that equality of opportunity is an ideal to be aimed at, but he will think this a small thing in comparison with the universality of duty. In his attitude toward mankind he will not deny the claims of sympathy, but he will listen first to the voice of judgment:

> Away with charity that soothes a lie,
> And thrusts the truth with scorn and anger by.

He will be sensitive to the vast injustices of life and its widespread sorrows, but he will not be seduced by that compassion into the hypocrisy of saying that "the love of those whom a man does not know is quite as elemental a sentiment as the love of those whom a man does know." Nor, in repudiating such a falsehood, will he, like the mistress of Hull Hall, lose his power of discrimination under the stress of "those vast and dominant suggestions of a new peace and holiness," that is "to issue forth from broken human nature itself, out of the pathetic striving of ordinary men." Rather, he will, at any cost, strive to clear away the clouds of cant, and so open his mind to the dictates of the everlasting morality.

LA VIE PARISIENNE

JOHN JAY CHAPMAN

Mr. John Jay Chapman is an American writer who early gave up a career in law to devote himself to authorship. He brought a character of unusual independence and a mind of great freshness and originality to the discussion of public questions as well as of purely literary topics. What particularly distinguishes his literary essays is his habit of sweeping away the age-long accretions of scholarly interpretation by which the great books are often obscured and allowing his reader to get an unobstructed view of what might very well be the original meaning. Any interpretation offered to us by a third person is, of course, only an interpretation; still, Mr. Chapman reminds us in a salutary way of the dangers of pedantry. The best known of his literary studies is that which he devoted to Emerson, from whose life and writing he drew the inspiration for his own individualism and practical idealism. He has at all times been a discerning critic of tendencies in American life without sacrificing his faith in the possibilities of that life. The malady that has caught his attention in *La Vie Parisienne* is perhaps not among our most serious problems, yet it has taken a somewhat graver turn since the essay was written. It is not so much a question of the enormous tide of Americans that overruns Europe during the summer months, but that since the war there has been an increasing number of "intellectuals" and artists who have grown dissatisfied and irritated with the conditions of life in this country and sought in Europe the ideal surroundings for the development of their talent. The sad spiritual plight of these expatriates has been shrewdly observed by Mr. Chapman and described with abundant humor and good sense. (The essay appeared in *Greek Genius and Other Essays*, 1915.)

LA VIE PARISIENNE*

"Il faut avoir ni foyer ni patrie pour rester à Paris." † — Balzac

I

THE WOMEN

I BEGIN with the women, because I am writing this essay in the hope of saving a favorite niece, who thinks of making a plunge into the vortex of Paris. Her impulse seems to be due to an illusion that she has artistic talents.

The clever woman who is born in America and craves excitement without having the vigor to be emotional, finds herself in Paris as easily as the young silkworm, on emerging from the egg, finds himself sitting on a mulberry leaf and prepared to begin his breakfast. The worm has bitten his way through the leaf and sits on top.

The novelists have given us pictures of the climbing American girl — pictures perhaps too dark, yet true in the main. They show that by the mere instinct of climbing, or the mere passion for excitement, a certain type of American woman finds herself in Paris. These novels often come from the hands of the women themselves, and show a great mastery over one side of the subject. They depict with unchristian gusto the moral degeneration of the characters. They seem to be punishing the children of their own imaginations, as if the creatures were their personal enemies. The general tendency of social fiction has of late years been

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† One must be without either hearth or home to remain in Paris.

towards this sort of cruelty, and enough has never been said in extenuation of the faults of the American heroines, or indeed in explanation of the whole phenomenon of those wingless women who sit crunching mulberry leaves in Paris. They are maids who have been starved at home; they have been bored, they have been left unsatisfied by the social amenities of America. And from infancy they have struggled and fought, and sought, and tasted, and pushed blindly up until, at last, they have reached Colombin's cakes, Louis XV decorations, the titillation of refined conversation; in short, *tous les agréments de la vie.* Here in Paris is the elegance they longed for in their cradles — chairs that rest them, sensibility that understands them, a new and not too great excitement for each hour of the day: the trees in the spring, the hats in the shop windows, the latest book, the latest genteel gentleman with something to say that is full of interest (he has seen a balloon, he knows the Swedish ambassador, he is a complete knight and a delightful, educated, romantic European).

There is something that Paris gives to the American woman whose domesticity is unsatisfactory which nothing in heaven or earth can replace — not religion, not love, not ambition, not care for the children of her womb, not the memory of scenes of her childhood, not old friends: nothing but the feeling of beautiful Paris goes quite to the right spot in this American female.

Of course there are differences in quality and in the refinement of taste among these enraptured children of Eve. The coarse minded and uneducated find the pang of the poison in lace and diamonds; the refined and educated find it in the phrases and *nuances* of the drawing-room life. It is a fact, however, that a specific psychological relation exists between these women and this city. This is what makes the whole matter a fair subject for examination and

analysis, for prayer and meditation, for uplift and reform, for record and historic commemoration.

Surely mankind may draw some lesson from a devout study of these acknowledged mysteries. The great thing would be to find out what happens to these pleasure-seeking females at the turning point; that is to say, at the very moment when they reach Paris. They must of course do something different from what they did before reaching Paris, for Paris is the top; once Paris is reached, there is nowhere to go but down. This must cause some sort of convulsion in their silky natures. I assume, of course, that each one has got to the top of her own particular Paris, whether it be in a restaurant or in French salons. What happens when the worm reaches her limit and further climbing is positively impossible? Does she go round and round? Does she get thinner or fatter? Does she go into a doze and spin? My belief is that when she strikes her limit she begins to die. Thereafter the refinements become a habit, their pleasure-giving power of course diminishes. She is now a complete product of the American colony. Desiccation and contraction gradually reduce her to the paper-doll condition which is familiar to us all.

Another interesting study would be to determine whether a woman has ever been saved from the fate of Paris. Has a lover or a son ever plunged through the fire and brought one back alive, set her by an American fireside, interested her in her children's fate, warmed her back to such a point of vigor that the coarse blasts of American life could blow upon her soul and feed her within? The novelists have never imagined such a rescue, and the thing is probably very rare.

Still another point to be determined would be whether this Paris disease is congenital (which I rather believe), or depends upon circumstances. Given the American girl with such and such a percentage of passion, so much brains, so

much education, so much money: does not the rest follow inevitably, just as the tadpole grows into a frog and not into a lion? And might not some extremely great doctor in North Adams, Massachusetts, as he examines a new-born female infant and holds the little worm to the light, wrinkle his brow, think deeply, take off his glasses, and say impressively the single word "Paris"?

There is an innocence about these fellow-countrywomen of ours to whom this essay is dedicated, somewhat like the innocence of a man who has a paper attached to his coat-tail without being aware of it, or the innocence of the drunkard, or the innocence of the self-reliant strong man who cannot be fooled, and whom his wife fools and manages till the audience which ought to be amused is tempted to feel pity. They hang like leeches on French civilization, so visible are they, so detached, so peculiar, so much a class by themselves, so eccentric, so exotic, so artificial. And yet they are of all people in the world the most convinced that their feet are on solid ground, that they understand life, that they know the meaning of nationality, that they hold the secrets of the intellect. Every breath of the breeze that fans them thinner and dries them harder brings to them a new sensation of robustness and succulence. Every light that makes them look like caricatures makes them feel like well-grounded and central personalities.

The change that comes over them when they reach their zenith is unconscious — Death is unconscious — and the decadence of the spirit is always unconscious. The conscious part of life is the awakening, the being born, the growing, the becoming sensitive to wider forms of truth; and exceedingly unpleasant it generally is. One would never go to Paris to gain this experience, though one would willingly go there to escape from it.

The Psychology of Pleasure and Pain: this is the great

subject which our study of the American woman in Paris leads up to. What is the injury that some pleasures do to us? What kinds of pleasure are to be looked upon askance? What element in pleasure is it that hurts the intellect? for there exists some such element. Some kinds of pleasure injure the intellect in the very moment that they seem to increase its activity, — opium, for instance, and many other drugs, — special stimulations, which give intense pleasures in specific areas of the consciousness. The most powerful that I can think of at the moment is the exaltation of vanity. I had rather that a man take a dose of opium than a dose of vanity, so far as his mind is concerned. Vanity is a cutting poison that destroys portions of a man's nature, as vitriol burns flesh; and vanity is one of the intensest pleasures of which the human heart is capable. The same is true of a great rage. Indeed, the artificial stimulants which heighten the enjoyment of life, such as whiskey and tobacco, and seem to harm us in ways that medicine reaches easily, have strong rivals in those purely psychological excitements which damage us in ways that medical science cannot reach. Perhaps the psychological effect is what does the injury in both cases.

My only point here is that there are innocent-seeming occupations which give the most thrilling joy and which do our minds the most desperate injury, — occupations that kill the very nerves of life.

These American women whom fate has thrown into a class by themselves, and whom for half a century we have been able to study as they passed through various stages of moral decay, are plainly the victims of some sort of injurious pleasure. It must be pleasure that hurts them, because they themselves confess that pleasure is their reason for living in Paris; pleasure is their aim in life, pleasure they get. This pleasure must be injurious, for behold its work!

II

WICKED, LOVELY PARIS

Before taking up the cases of these ill-starred women, let us say a few words about Paris itself. The whole world, not America only, needs to be inoculated against the charms of that city. She has ruined generations of English people. She destroys the Turk, the South American, the Russian, the West Indian, the Persian. There is something about her so free, so agreeable, so capable of satisfying the humor of everyone, so sensible, so clever, so unspoiled, so unsophisticated, that not to have seen Paris is not to have lived at all. The side-streets are as interesting as the streets of little-known, remote Italian towns. The neat squares and distances are the most beautiful in the world. For a franc you get a touch of magic; it may be in a spear of asparagus, or in a glimpse of the roof of the Louvre. Paris is the Arabian Nights, we must admit it. We have all known the glamor and the joy.

The experience, however, wears thin for most people. The man with a life and a country of his own goes back to them gladly after shorter and shorter visits to Paris. He gets from Paris, perhaps, a whiff of the past, a note of his own romantic early feelings, a breath of beauty old and new. But he is content to leave. He flees it, in fact; it palls. It sends him back eager for all that it cannot give and has never given, except to Frenchmen.

Now the victims of Paris are persons who never get their second wind; they are keeled over again and again, and as fast as they stagger to their feet they are felled again by some unseen power of her charms. The lotus, the lotus! here doth it bloom indeed! the devil of the place is that it is so easy to get to. If it were Bagdad, and no railways existed, it would seduce but a few rich epicureans whom the world

could well spare; but Paris takes up the ordinary London nobleman, or the New York millionaire, and it draws to its heart of loadstone the fluttering non-maternity of all countries.

For Americans Paris is merely the focal, burning point of the general attraction which Europe normally exerts upon their simple natures. We in America are children of European civilization, and Europe is our home. Of course we are delighted at finding everything so well done, so old, so cheap, so thrilling as everything is. When an American goes to Europe he is a rustic on a visit to the metropolis. It would be a disgrace to us if we were not enchanted with the sights and sounds of the Old World. And indeed no one can complain of us in this respect. The American child, when he sees Europe, gets a new impression of his whole human inheritance.

III

THE DAMNED

The Americans who become so bewitched with the Old World as to reside in it may be rightly divided into three classes: Vulgarians, Natural Nobles, and the Inner Temple. The Vulgarians are those who frankly like the good things of the world, and find they get more for their money in Europe than at home. The Natural Nobles are those Americans who discern in themselves a kindred natal aristocracy which binds them to Europe. They feel as if they had been changed at birth and were really European persons of family, with coats of arms, good accents, and men-servants. They cannot remember a time when they did not feel like fine ladies and gentlemen. They hold the hands of the real nobles very tightly when they meet them, and look in their eyes very lovingly. They are really long-lost brothers to dukes and kings, to barons, and to persons with old names

and good manners, — indeed, to almost everyone who has the run of the great houses or small houses where the sacred society of refined and titled Europe congregates. A holy smell, as of incense, pervades the habitations of the elect in Europe; a gentle radiation of influence causes the Natural Noble from America to purr and raise his back and rub himself against the knees of the great, — yea, even against the chairs and wainscoting.

The Inner Temple consists of the intellectuals. These are people who, in the way of books and letters, pictures, small talk, and parlor education, find themselves happy in Europe and unhappy in America. They are often staunch democrats in social sympathy, but they melt before the finesse of European cultivation. Crudity is their bugbear.

It will be seen that all of these classes run into one another, and are really portions of a sort of spiral hierarchy, made up of Americans who are sensitive towards the refinements of (1) cookery, (2) social manners, and (3) æsthetic expression. The Vulgarians are the most robust of the three classes, for they proclaim the lowness of their aims, and they frankly enjoy contact with one another. They are the *tiers état*, the good *bourgeoisie* of the American Colony. The *bourgeois* are, of course, despised by the Natural Nobles, whose illusion it is that they themselves associate only with foreigners. The Vulgarians are especially unpleasant to them, because the Vulgarians are in their way; the Vulgarians are a reproach to them, a travesty of them. The Vulgarians make the path of the Natural Nobles difficult in Europe in a thousand ways. Often a Natural Noble has sisters and brothers who are Vulgarians; for Natural Nobility is a personal sanctification, an illumination, a grace rather than an inheritance. In this it differs from the older European nobility, which depends upon externals. The American noble is noble by virtue of an inner revelation.

When I was a child of about seven I was taken to St. Cloud, and on that day the Spirit descended upon me, and I became one of the Elect. It was in a great drawing-room, with miles of polished parquet flooring and hundreds of spindle chairs, gilded more completely than it could be thought possible to gild anything, — gold chairs they looked like, — and many crystal chandeliers, and many tall windows and many mirrors and cheval-glasses. I was struck dumb with delight, and I said to myself, "This is the sort of thing that I like! It is native to me; I have always been waiting for this! It must be that I am a king!"

In this early experience of my own I seem to see an explanation of the American Colony in Europe. From the Vulgarian to the Inner Temple, the American Colonist in Europe feels that he is really at home. He is in Abraham's bosom. All the beginning of his life was an unpleasant dream. All of that early New York, all of that deadly Boston, *ne compte plus.*

The Inner Temple has, of course, a better developed metaphysical consciousness than the other two classes. The Inner Temple is the Flower of the Bean — "the bean-flower's boon," as Browning would say. It is the perfect gentian of a rootless flower, and it blossoms in the boudoir of a Spirit that lives *in vacuo*. These intellectuals have found their heaven, too. Why, they are as much at home in books and in pictures as the worm is in the chestnut.

IV

ABBÉS AND CUPS OF CHOCOLATE

Now I must make a digression at the risk of fatiguing the reader, and tell him that there has always existed in Europe a whole society of critical cleverness which runs behind the progress of the arts like dogs at a fair. The parlor oracle

was a common character in Roman society, as one may see in Horace. So is the man that knows the last joke or the last news. It has always been a game in Europe to surprise people in the drawing-room, to give the quip, to show oneself to be *au courant*, to take the trick in conversation, — and, above all, to shun crudity. This game of shunning crudity is today a living part of the Roman Empire which shines in the drawing-rooms of every European capital, and which, by the way, any one can learn to play in the course of two weeks. It is a shallow, foolish game — a bore of a game; but the *bon-ton* has always played it, and always will. Men of real importance who move in the *beau monde* play it out of habit, and a whole world of insignificant people play it because it is their religion.

The drawing-room world of social and æsthetic chatter draws such vitality as it has from the deeper currents of national life that flow about it and over it. It is a fringe of those real intellectual worlds which lie invisible in the great peoples of Europe. It is a sort of servants' dining-hall, which implies the existence of masters and of royal folk somewhere else. Tolstoi shows this chatter world to us in one of its aspects, Thackeray in another, de Goncourt in another; and all of the moralists who have described it make you feel that this tavern of criticism and *bibeloterie* is a little wart or excrescence which grows on the body of Art. It is a parasite — perhaps a necessary parasite — which all healthy art supports without evil consequences.

Now the Inner Templar from America gets into this tavern of criticism and thinks he is seeing life. He finds (at first almost to his surprise) that he is holding up his end with the rest; no one resents him; he is encouraged; no one knows that he is different from the others; he does not know it himself. But the truth is that, unlike the others, he has no home, but must sit up all night when the rest

have gone to their families. He has no customs, no habits, no unconscious support from a world of his own. The things he eats are not his. His very toothpick is of a foreign model, and he speaks to his valet in French. After he has talked his proper chatter about Art, he may go to a hired room to work over Art.

V

THE CREATIVE WORK OF ALIENS

A man who writes is like a spider who draws a web out of his stomach: the thread of his own life is revealed in the process. Art is the most personal matter in the world; and nevertheless the artist is — as we shall see in a moment — a mere embryo enclosed in society as the frog's egg is held in its place on the surface of a pond, — protected, fed, and controlled by those vital forces with which it is most immediately in contact.

As we all know, it is the early years of life that most deeply impress all men, and most seriously influence the poet and the novelist. An artist is forever telling about his earliest impressions; and the whole power of his art, which increases with age and practice, is put to illustrating the thoughts and passions of his earliest years.

Let us now recall the problems which normally occupy the minds of Americans who reside abroad. And note here that we are drifting towards the universal in these speculations, which concern themselves as much with London as with Paris. The dear old maids from Baltimore, New York, and Boston who founded the American Colonies in Europe, — the Forty-niners, — were always interested in cheap *pensions*. You paid six francs at one place, but they would not black the shoes there; the coffee was best at No. 47, but you have quarrelled with No. 47 and regretted having done so. In the course of time, when Art, and the self-conscious-

ness of Art, began to creep into the American Colonies in Europe, this Art was colored by the triviality of the life. The Art dealt with things that might be seen by a fly, stale things, spots and externals, the soul-problems of the lodging-hunter and of the tuft-hunter. There was no vigor, no passion, no big interest in this life, or in the reflection of this life in its works of art.

It is not merely that the literary members of these colonies write about unimportant things. It is that all these colonists have nothing important to think about, and hence, when they write, they write *chiffons*. Their bards sing, not of arms and the man, but of petty miseries, pimples on the face of society, mean ambitions, empty hearts. The little blights and lichens of social life are put under a microscope and enlarged into hideous ugliness. And all this epidermic school of letters (which, by the way, is a peculiarly American product; no one else ever wrote in this manner before) is conducted with appalling seriousness and in pretended imitation of Balzac, and Flaubert, and I know not of whom.

Here, then, comes the revelation of the great gulf that lies between the Inner Temple and any normal intellectual life: the Inner Temple has no outer temple. It is a core without an apple. Your American novelist in London or Paris is shut into his studio with his dreams, — and he dreams of Americans abroad. And when he runs short of Americans abroad he is obliged to return to 1872 and to give pictures of Kentucky before the war. He cannot throb with the healthy emotionalism of European life; nor can he draw upon the contemporary life of his own people. His relation towards his own people has become hostile and querulous. His brain is starving for support from his fellow-men.

The great *djinn* who does the work for the artist, the slave who draws the water for the hero while he sleeps, who

mows the ten acres of corn in a night, — this mysterious friend is the Unconscious. And this Unconscious is somehow a thing which other people share. It is the block out of which we are hewn, and the pit out of which we are digged. The Unconscious is the great umbilical cord that holds a man in touch with the universe and permits the power of the universe to reverberate through him. How explain this phenomenon? How make a man believe in the importance of a force which must in its very essence always remain unconscious?

These floating Americans, whose cultivation represents the wart without the body, have detached themselves from the great dynamo of life. If one could see what was happening in the souls of these people, one would long to cut them down like suicides. What the reasons may be for this loss of power in expatriated persons we do not know. Apparently nature speaks only through a crowd. There must be a great many individuals who all feel alike before any one of them can say a word that is true. There is ingenuousness at the bottom of all power; a real belief that your way of thinking must prevail, because you know that everyone at bottom is like yourself, — this belief is what makes your words count.

Consider Walter Scott's way of writing, or Napoleon's way of commanding. Consider a Frenchman's way of driving in a nail, or an Italian's way of eating macaroni. Consider the air with which an American rings a door-bell and then stands nonchalantly on the door-step, waiting for the door to be opened. There is a whole-hearted and headlong manner of life which betrays itself in all these activities, and which makes us see and feel that the thing in hand is important.

There are certain flowers from whose root a long filament goes out, a hairy process which is called a *biotic root*. This

biotic root is an insignificant, superfluous-looking string, and often is accidentally destroyed while the flowers are being transplanted; but when this superfluous-looking root is cut the plant dies. Now the quality which the expatriated American loses is somehow due to the loss of his biotic root; but to say just what the thing is or does, whether in horticulture or in a spiritual sense, is beyond our power.

VI

THE POOR INDIAN

The terrible thing about Nature is that she operates but never explains. Nature lets a man die for lack of oxygen, but she never says to him: "What you need, my dear fellow, is oxygen." The scientist and his laboratory are required to find the labels for the poisons of the world. We see certain evil symptoms, certain weaknesses and faintnesses of nature, deficiencies of energy and dead spots; but we can never be sure that we have properly accounted for them. If there is any truth in my diagnosis of the heart and brain troubles which attack Americans residing in Europe, then we must look a long way back for the causes. We must go back to Columbus' time, and perceive that the rush of Europeans to America and their segregation for a few centuries on a new soil made them peculiarly sensitive to certain home microbes, certain drawing-room diseases of Europe, from which their frontier life had been peculiarly free. When the Americans return to Europe the pleasures of the intellect become to them a danger, because they roll themselves in those pleasures as a cat rolls in valerian. The cult of cultivation, which is merely a becoming sort of fashionable cough to thousands of Europeans, runs straight into scarlet fever and typhoid with the American visitors. The pose of refinement, the dread of crudity, the love of

bibelots, become, as it were, mortal sins to the long-lost American.

We must note one very interesting fact: the American who is in Europe selling steam-boilers or distributing Belgian relief, or even on some business connected with art or literature, does not show signs of this fussy sickness. He does his business and goes home. It is the man who stays in Europe in search of sensation that catches the disease.

The disease in all it forms is Nature's punishment for the vice of seeking sensation. The *dilettantes* of ancient Rome, who suffered from it, were people who wanted to draw a little more pleasure out of life than health would permit. "We are all of us too clever!" says Montaigne; "and in order to grow wise we must become dull." Now Americans have not enough reserve power to indulge in any cleverness at all, with impunity. They exhibit the rarest variety of the disease of cleverness which has ever been known, because they have lived in the wilderness till they have lost the power to take sophistication lightly. Sophistication is poison to them; they die of it, as red Indians die of whiskey.

Our only road to strength in America lies through the building up of the arts and sciences *in America*, and in an increase in the general complexity of our social and intellectual life. Your intelligent American will stand more chance of becoming a significant intelligence if he babbles in the purlieus of Hoboken than if he hobnobs with the Sorbonne. He will then be able to retain his own point of view on entering Europe, and will not drop it in the ante-chamber of the first European house he enters. When he goes to Europe he will go as the business man does, bringing his own thoughts, his own wares, his own aims and habits with him and feeling no false shame as to his crudity. He will not be so impressed with the importance of small things, whether

they be visiting-cards or the tittle-tattle of the intellectual classes, as he is at present. He will, in fact, have a self-respecting and natural relation, instead of a simian and nervous relation, towards the things of the mind in the Old World.

After all, the typical American manufacturer who comes abroad with his foolish wife and daughters and is held up to ridicule in the novels of the Anglo- and Franco-American literatures (this school of fiction seems to have only one theme) is a step nearer to true cultivation than the rest of the characters in the books, — a step nearer than the authors who write them; for this manufacturer is a part of a continent and of a tradition, a part of an unconscious force. The other personages are dried leaves.

THE ART OF MORALS

HAVELOCK ELLIS

Among English writers of the present day there is hardly one who combines the gifts of the scientist, the social philosopher, and the literary artist as richly as Mr. Havelock Ellis. To a sound training in biology and psychology, to which he has made contributions of great importance, he adds a wide and enlightened acquaintance with the great traditional philosophic and moral systems of the world and a mastery of its great literatures. He is, besides, in the current of all the modern investigations in the fields of anthropology and sociology, lending a sympathetic mind to all adventurous thinking and research. From a student so equipped we should expect a conception of human life which took cognizance of all the activities and all the faculties that enter into the constitution of man. He does something more than take cognizance of them; he aims to construct a theory of living which harmonizes man's aspirations with his instincts and gives to life a serious and dignified goal. Keeping firm hold on the *analysis* of the world supplied by the physicist, his own chief interest is to supply the philosophic *synthesis* which gives the world its human meaning. His conception of life as being essentially an art — the most complex and important of all arts but of definitely like kind with the other arts, such as painting and music — is one which he found diffused among Greeks in the time of Socrates and among the Chinese of the age of Confucius. In Europe, with the triumph of the disciplinary sense of the Romans and the rigorous moral system of Christianity, this æsthetic conception of life disappeared and was not revived till the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the writings of the third Earl of Shaftesbury brought it once more to the attention of philosophers. For our own time, according to Mr. Havelock Ellis, this attitude has a special value because we are still too much in the habit of regarding morality as something "rigid, inflexible, and dead" instead

of "living, flexible, and growing." It is important to observe, however, that he is not calling for a revolution in the customary modes of behavior. For the mass of men, he says, morals must always be a matter of custom and discipline. "The traditional and instinctive way of living, based on real motor instincts" is the stable ground of human conduct, but with this must be blended the way of reason which illuminates and shows new paths. Morals is an art only for the leaders who are possessed of creative, guiding intelligence. (From *The Dance of Life*, 1923.)

THE ART OF MORALS*

NO man has ever counted the books that have been written about morals. No subject seems so fascinating to the human mind. It may well be, indeed, that nothing imports us so much as to know how to live. Yet it can scarcely be that on any subject are the books that have been written more unprofitable, one might even say unnecessary.

For when we look at the matter objectively it is, after all, fairly simple. If we turn our attention to any collective community, at any time and place, in its moral aspect, we may regard it as an army on the march along a road of life more or less encompassed by danger. That, indeed, is scarcely a metaphor; that is what life, viewed in its moral aspect, may really be considered. When thus considered, we see that it consists of an extremely small advance guard in front, formed of persons with a limited freedom of moral action and able to act as patrols in various directions, of a larger body in the rear, in ancient military language called the blackguard and not without its uses, and in the main of a great compact majority with which we must always be chiefly concerned since they really are the army; they are the community. What we call 'morals' is simply blind obedience to words of command — whether or not issued by leaders the army believes it has itself chosen — of which the significance is hidden, and beyond this the duty of keeping in step with the others, or of trying to keep in step,

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or else pretending to do so.* It is an automatic, almost unconscious process and only becomes acutely conscious when the individual is hopelessly out of step; then he may be relegated to the rear blackguard. But that happens seldom. So there is little need to be concerned about it. Even if it happened very often, nothing overwhelming would have taken place; it would merely be that what we called the blackguard had now become the main army, though with a different discipline. We are, indeed, simply concerned with a discipline or routine which in this field is properly described as *custom*, and the word *morals* essentially means *custom*. That is what morals must always be for the mass, and, indeed, to some extent for all, a discipline, and, as we have already seen, a discipline cannot properly be regarded as a science or an art. The innumerable books on morals, since they have usually confused and befogged this simple and central fact, cannot fail to be rather unprofitable. That, it would seem, is what the writers thought — at all events about those the others had written — or else they would not have considered it necessary for themselves to add to the number. It was not only an unprofitable task, it was also — except in so far as an objectively scientific attitude has been assumed — aimless. For, although the morals of a community at one time and place is never the same as that of another or even the same community at another time and place, it is a complex web of conditions that produces the difference, and it must have been evident that to

* What we call crime is, at the beginning, usually an effort to get, or to pretend to get, into step, but, being a violent or miscalculated effort, it is liable to fail, and the criminal falls to the rear of the social army. 'I believe that most murders are really committed by Mrs. Grundy,' a woman writes to me, and, with the due qualification, that saying is worthy of meditation. That is why justice is impotent to prevent or even to punish murder, for Mrs. Grundy is within all of us, being a part of the social discipline, and cannot be hanged.

attempt to affect it was idle.* There is no occasion for any one who is told that he has written a 'moral' book to be unduly elated, or when he is told that his book is 'immoral' to be unduly cast down. The significance of these adjectives is strictly limited. Neither the one book nor the other can have more than the faintest effect on the march of the great compact majority of the social army.

Yet, while all this is so, there is still some interest in the question of morals. For, after all, there is the small body of individuals ahead, alertly eager to find the road, with a sensitive flair for all the possibilities the future may hold. When the compact majority, blind and automatic and unconscious, follows after, to tramp along the road these pioneers have discovered, it may seem but a dull road. But before they reached it that road was interesting, even passionately interesting.

The reason is that, for those who, in any age, are thus situated, life is not merely a discipline. It is, or it may become, really an art.

That living is or may be an art, and the moralist the critic of that art, is a very ancient belief. It was especially widespread among the Greeks. To the Greeks, indeed, this belief was so ingrained and instinctive that it became an implicitly assumed attitude rather than a definitely expressed faith. It was natural to them to speak of a virtuous person as we should speak of a beautiful person. The 'good' was the 'beautiful'; the sphere of ethics for the Greeks was not distinguished from the sphere of æsthetics. In Sophocles,

* Herbert Spencer, writing to a correspondent, once well expressed the harmlessness — if we choose so to regard it — of moral teaching: 'After nearly two thousand years' preaching of the religion of amity, the religion of enmity remains predominant, and Europe is peopled by two hundred million pagans, masquerading as Christians, who revile those who wish them to act on the principles they profess.'

above all poets, we gather the idea of a natural agreement between duty and inclination which is at once both beauty and moral order. But it is the beautiful that seems to be most fundamental in τὸ καλόν, which was the noble, the honourable, but fundamentally the beautiful. 'Beauty is the first of all things,' said Isocrates, the famous orator: 'nothing that is devoid of beauty is prized. . . . The admiration for virtue comes to this, that of all manifestation of life, virtue is the most beautiful.' The supremely beautiful was, for the finer sort of Greeks, instinctively if not always consciously, the supremely divine, and the Argive Hera, it has been said, 'has more divinity in her countenance than any Madonna of them all.' That is how it came to pass that we have no word in our speech to apply to the Greek conception; æsthetics for us is apart from all the serious business of life, and the attempt to introduce it there seems merely comic. But the Greeks spoke of life itself as a craft or a fine art. Protagoras, who appears to-day as a pioneer of modern science, was yet mainly concerned to regard living as an art, or as the sum of many crafts, and the Platonic Socrates, his opponent, still always assumed that the moralist's position is that of a critic of a craft. So influential a moralist as Aristotle remarks in a matter-of-fact way, in his 'Poetics,' that if we wish to ascertain whether an act is, or is not, morally right we must consider not merely the intrinsic quality of the act, but the person who does it, the person to whom it is done, the time, the means, the motive. Such an attitude towards life puts out of court any appeal to rigid moral laws; it meant that an act must befit its particular relationships at a particular moment, and that its moral value could, therefore, only be judged by the standard of the spectator's instinctive feeling for proportion and harmony. That is the attitude we adopt towards a work of art.

It may well appear strange to those who cherish the modern idea of 'æstheticism' that the most complete statement of the Greek attitude has come down to us in the writings of a philosopher, an Alexandrian Greek who lived and taught in Rome in the third century of our Christian Era, when the Greek world had vanished, a religious mystic, moreover, whose life and teaching were penetrated by an austere ascetic severity which some would count mediæval rather than Greek.* It is in Plotinus, a thinker whose inspiring influence still lives to-day that we probably find the Greek attitude, in its loftiest aspect, best mirrored, and it was probably through channels that came from Plotinus — though their source was usually unrecognised — that the Greek moral spirit has chiefly reached modern times. Many great thinkers and moralists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it has been claimed, were ultimately indebted to Plotinus, who represented the only genuinely creative effort of the Greek spirit in the third century.†

Plotinus seems to have had little interest in art, as commonly understood, and he was an impatient, rapid, and

* But later asceticism was strictly the outcome of a Greek tendency, to be traced in Plato, developed through Antisthenes, through Zeno, through Epictetus, who all desired to liberate the soul from the bonds of matter. The Neo-Platonists carried this tendency further, for in their time the prevailing anarchy and confusion rendered the world and society less than ever a fitting haven for the soul. It was not Christianity that made the world ascetic (and there were elements of hedonism in the teaching of Jesus), but the world that made Christianity ascetic, and it was easy for a Christian to become a Neo-Platonist, for they were both being moulded by the same forces.

† Maurice Croiset devotes a few luminous critical pages to Plotinus in the Croisets' *Histoire de la Littérature Grecque*, vol. v, pp. 820–31. As an extended account of Plotinus, from a more enthusiastically sympathetic standpoint, there are Dr. Inge's well-known Gifford Lectures, *The Philosophy of Plotinus* (1918); I may also mention a careful scholastic study, *L'Esthétique de Plotin* (1913), by Cochez of Louvain, who regards Plotinus as the climax of the objective æsthetics of antiquity and the beginning of the road to modern subjective æsthetics.

disorderly writer, not even troubling to spell correctly. All his art was in the spiritual sphere. It is impossible to separate æsthetics, as he understood it, from ethics and religion. In the beautiful discourse on Beauty, which forms one of the chapters of his first 'Ennead,' it is mainly with spiritual beauty that he is concerned. But he insists that it *is* beauty, beauty of the same quality as that of the physical world, which inheres in goodness, 'nor may those tell of the splendour of Virtue who have never known the face of Justice and of Wisdom beautiful beyond the beauty of Evening and of Dawn.' It is a beauty, he further states — though here he seems to be passing out of the purely æsthetic sphere — that arouses emotions of love. 'This is the spirit that Beauty must ever induce, wonderment and a delicious trouble, longing and love, and a trembling that is also delight. For the unseen all this may be felt as for the seen, and this souls feel for it, every soul in some degree, but those the more deeply who are the more truly apt to this higher love — just as all take delight in the beauty of the body, but all are not strung as sharply, and those only that feel the keener wound are known as Lovers.' Goodness and Truth were on the same plane for Plotinus as Beauty. It may even be said that Beauty was the most fundamental of all, to be identified ultimately as the Absolute, as Reality itself. So it was natural that in the sphere of morals he should speak indifferently either of 'extirpating evil and implanting goodness' or of 'introducing order and beauty to replace goodness' — in either case 'we talk of real things.' 'Virtue is a natural concordance among the phenomena of the soul, vice a discord.' But Plotinus definitely rejects the notion that beauty is only symmetry, and so he avoids the narrow conception of some more modern æsthetic moralists, notably Hutcheson. How, then, he asks, could the sun be beautiful, or gold, or light, or night, or the stars?

'Beauty is something more than symmetry, and symmetry owes its beauty to a remote principle' — its affinity, in the opinion of Plotinus, with the 'Ideal Form,' immediately recognised and confirmed by the soul.

It may seem to some that Plotinus reduces to absurdity the conception of morality as æsthetics, and it may well be that the Greeks of the great period were wiser when they left the nature of morals less explicit. Yet Plotinus had in him the root of the matter. He had risen to the conception that the moral life of the soul is a dance; 'Consider the performers in a choral dance: they sing together, though each one has his own particular part, and sometimes one voice is heard while the others are silent; and each brings to the chorus something of his own; it is not enough that all lift their voices together; each must sing, choicely, his own part in the music set for him. So it is with the Soul.' * The Hellenic extension of the æsthetic emotion, as Benn pointed out, involved no weakening of the moral fibre. That is so, we see, and even emphatically so, when it becomes definitely explicit as in Plotinus, and revolutionarily hostile to all those ideals of the moral life which most people have been accustomed to consider modern.

As usually among the Greeks, it is only implicitly, also, that we detect this attitude among the Romans, the pupils of the Greeks. For the most part the Romans, whose impulses of art were very limited, whose practical mind craved precision and definition, proved rebellious to the idea that living is an art; yet it may well be that they still retained that idea at the core of their morality. It is interesting to note that St. Augustine, who stood on the threshold between the old Roman and new Christian worlds was able to write: 'The art of living well and rightly is the definition that the

* *Ennead*, bk. III, chap. VI. I have mostly followed the translation of Stephen McKenna.

ancients give of "virtue."' For the Latins believed that *ars* was derived from the Greek word for virtue, ἀρετή.* Yet there really remained a difference between the Greek and the Roman views of morals. The Greek view, it is universally admitted, was æsthetic, in the most definite sense; the Roman was not, and when Cicero wishes to translate a Greek reference to a 'beautiful' action it becomes an 'honourable' action. The Greek was concerned with what he himself felt about his actions; the Roman was concerned with what they would look like to other people, and the credit, or discredit, that would be reflected back on himself.

The Hebrews never even dreamed of such an art. Their attitude is sufficiently embodied in the story of Moses and that visit to Sinai which resulted in the production of the table of Ten Commandments which we may still see inscribed in old churches. For even our modern feeling about morals is largely Jewish, in some measure Roman, and scarcely Greek at all. We still accept, in theory at all events, the Mosaic conception of morality as a code of rigid and inflexible rules, arbitrarily ordained, and to be blindly obeyed.

The conception of morality as an art, which Christendom once disdained, seems now again to be finding favour in men's eyes. The path has been made smooth for it by great thinkers of various complexion, who, differing in many fundamental points, all alike assert the relativity of truth and the inaptitude of rigid maxims to serve as guiding forces in life. They also assert, for a large part, implicitly or explicitly, the authority of art.

The nineteenth century was usually inspired by the maxims of Kant, and lifted its hat reverently when it heard Kant declaiming his famous sayings concerning the supremacy of an inflexible moral law. Kant, had indeed, felt the stream of influence which flowed from Shaftesbury, and

* St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, bk. IV, chap. XXI.

he sought to mix up æsthetics with his system. But he had nothing of the genuine artist's spirit. The art of morals was to him a set of maxims, cold, rigid, precise. A sympathetic biographer has said of him that the maxims were the man. They are sometimes fine maxims. But as guides, as motives to practical action in the world? The maxims of the valetudinarian professor at Königsberg scarcely seem that to us to-day. Still less can we harmonise maxims with art. Nor do we any longer suppose that we are impertinent in referring to the philosopher's personality. In the investigation of the solar spectrum personality may count for little; in the investigation of moral laws it counts for much. For personality is the very stuff of morals. The moral maxims of an elderly professor in a provincial university town have their interest. But so have those of a Casanova. And the moral maxims of a Goethe may possibly have more interest than either. There is the rigid categorical imperative of Kant; and there is also that other dictum, less rigid but more reminiscent of Greece, which some well-inspired person has put into the mouth of Walt Whitman: 'Whatever tastes sweet to the most perfect person, that is finally right.'

Fundamentally considered, there are two roads by which we may travel towards the moral ends of life: the road of Tradition, which is ultimately that of Instinct, pursued by the many, and the road of what seems to be Reason — sought out by the few. And in the end these two roads are but the same road, for reason also is an instinct. It is true that the ingenuity of analytic investigators like Henry Sidgwick has succeeded in enumerating various 'methods of ethics.' But, roughly speaking, there can only be these two main roads of life, and only one has proved supremely important. It has been by following the path of tradition moulded by instinct that man reached the threshold of

civilisation: whatever may have been the benefits he derived from the guidance of reason he never consciously allowed reason to control his moral life. Tables of commandments have ever been 'given by God'; they represented, that is to say, obscure impulses of the organism striving to respond to practical needs. No one dreamed of commending them by declaring that they were reasonable.

It is clear how Instinct and Tradition, thus working together, act vitally and beneficently in moulding the moral life of primitive peoples. The 'divine command' was always a command conditioned by the special circumstance under which the tribe lived. That is so even when the moral law is to our civilised eyes 'unnatural.' The infanticide of Polynesian islanders, where the means of subsistence and the possibilities of expansion were limited, was obviously a necessary measure, beneficent and humane in its effects. The killing of the aged among the migrant Eskimos was equally a necessary and kindly measure, recognised as such by the victims themselves, when it was essential that every member of the community should be able to help himself. Primitive rules of moral action, greatly as they differ among themselves, are all more or less advantageous and helpful on the road of primitive life. It is true that they allow very little, if any, scope for divergent individual moral action, but that, too, was advantageous.

But that, also, is the rock on which an instinctive traditional morality must strike as civilisation is approached. The tribe has no longer the same unity. Social differentiation has tended to make the family a unit, and psychic differentiation to make even the separate individuals units. The community of interests of the whole tribe has been broken up, and therewith traditional morality has lost alike its value and its power.

The development of abstract intelligence, which coincides

with civilisation, works in the same direction. Reason is, indeed, on one side an integrating force, for it shows that the assumption of traditional morality — the identity of the individual's interests with the interests of the community — is soundly based. But it is also a disintegrating force. For if it reveals a general unity in the ends of living, it devises infinitely various and perplexingly distracting excuses for living. Before the active invasion of reason living had been an art, or at all events a discipline, highly conventionalised and even ritualistic, but the motive forces of living lay in life itself and had all the binding sanction of instincts; the penalty of every failure in living, it was felt, would be swiftly and automatically experienced. To apply reason here was to introduce a powerful solvent into morals. Objectively it made morality clearer but subjectively it destroyed the existing motives for morality; it deprived man, to use the fashionable phraseology of the present day, of a vital illusion.

Thus we have morality in the fundamental sense, the actual practices of the main army of the population, while in front a variegated procession of prancing philosophers gaily flaunt their moral theories before the world. Kant, whose personal moral problems were concerned with eating sweetmeats,* and other philosophers of varyingly inferior

* Kant was habitually cold and calm. But he was very fond of dried fruits and used to have them especially imported for him by his friend Motherby. 'At one time he was eagerly expecting a vessel with French fruits which he had ordered, and he had already invited some friends to a dinner at which they were to be served. The vessel was, however, delayed a number of days by a storm. When it arrived, Kant was informed that the provisions had become short on account of the delay, and that the crew had eaten his fruit. Kant was so angry that he declared they ought rather to have starved than to have touched it. Surprised at this irritation, Motherby said, "Professor, you cannot be in earnest." Kant answered, "I am really in earnest," and went away. Afterwards he was sorry.' (Quoted by Stuckenberg, *The Life of Kant*, p. 138.) But still it was quite in accordance with Kantian morality that the sailors should have starved.

calibre were regarded as the lawgivers of morality, though they carried little enough weight with the world at large.

Thus it comes about that abstract moral speculations, culminating in rigid maxims, are necessarily sterile and vain. They move in the sphere of reason, and that is the sphere of comprehension, but not of vital action. In this way there arises a moral dualism in civilised man. Objectively he has become like the gods and able to distinguish the ends of life; he has eaten of the fruit of the tree and has knowledge of good and evil. Subjectively he is still not far removed from the savage, oftenest stirred to action by a confused web of emotional motives, among which the interwoven strands of civilised reason are as likely to produce discord or paralysis as to furnish efficient guides, a state of mind first, and perhaps best, set forth in its extreme form by Shakespeare in Hamlet. On the one hand he cannot return to the primitive state in which all the motives for living flowed harmoniously in the same channel; he cannot divest himself of his illuminating reason; he cannot recede from his hardly acquired personal individuality. On the other hand he can never expect, he can never even reasonably hope, that reason will ever hold in leash the emotions. It is clear that along neither path separately can the civilised man pursue his way in harmonious balance with himself. We begin to realise that what we need is not a code of beautifully cut-and-dried maxims — whether emanating from sacred mountains or from philosophers' studies — but a happy combination of two different ways of living. We need, that is, a traditional and instinctive way of living, based on real motor instincts, which will blend with reason and the manifold needs of personality, instead of being destroyed by their solvent actions, as rigid rules inevitably are. Our only valid rule is a creative impulse that is one with the illuminative power of intelligence. . . .

It has often been brought against the conception of morality as an art that it lacks seriousness. It seems to many people to involve an easy, self-indulgent, dilettante way of looking at life. Certainly it is not the way of the Old Testament. Except in imaginative literature — it was, indeed, an enormous and fateful exception — the Hebrews were no 'æsthetic intuitionists.' They hated art, for the rest, and in face of the problems of living they were not in the habit of considering the lilies how they grow. It was not the beauty of holiness, but the stern rod of a jealous Jehovah, which they craved for their encouragement along the path of Duty. And it is the Hebrew mode of feeling which has been, more or less violently and imperfectly, grafted into our Christianity.*

It is a complete mistake, however, to suppose that those for whom life is an art have entered on an easy path, with nothing but enjoyment and self-indulgence before them. The reverse is nearer to the truth. It is probably the hedonist who had better choose rules if he only cares to make life pleasant.† For the artist life is always a discipline, and no

* It is noteworthy, however, that the æsthetic view of morals has had advocates, not only among the more latitudinarian Protestants, but in Catholicism. A few years ago the Reverend Dr. Kolbe published a book on *The Art of Life*, designed to show that just as the sculptor works with hammer and chisel to shape a block of marble into a form of beauty, so Man, by the power of grace, the illumination of faith, and the instrument of prayer, works to transform his soul. But this simile of the sculptor, which has appealed so strongly alike to Christian and anti-Christian moralists, proceeds, whether or not they knew it, from Plotinus, who, in his famous chapter on Beauty, bids us note the sculptor. 'He cuts away here, he smooths there, he makes this line lighter, this other purer, until a living face has grown upon his work. So do you also cut away all that is excessive, straighten all that is crooked, bring light to all that is overcast, make all one glow of beauty, and never cease chiselling your statue until the godlike splendour shines on you from it, and the perfect goodness stands, surely, in the stainless shrine.'

† 'They who pitched the goal of their aspiration so high knew that the paths leading up to it were rough and steep and long,' remarks A. W. Benn (*The Greek Philosophers*, 1914, p. 57); 'they said "the beautiful is hard"—hard to judge, hard to win, hard to keep'

discipline can be without pain. That is so even of dancing, which of all the arts is most associated in the popular mind with pleasure. To learn to dance is the most austere of disciplines, and even for those who have attained to the summit of its art often remains a discipline not to be exercised without heroism. The dancer seems a thing of joy, but we are told that this famous dancer's slippers are filled with blood when the dance is over, and that one falls down pulseless and deathlike on leaving the stage, and the other must spend the day in darkness and silence. 'It is no small advantage,' said Nietzsche, 'to have a hundred Damoclean swords suspended above one's head; that is how one learns to dance, that is how one attains "freedom of movement."' *

For as pain is entwined in an essential element in the perfect achievement of that which seems naturally the most pleasurable of the arts, so it is with the whole art of living, of which dancing is the supreme symbol. There is no separating Pain and Pleasure without making the first meaningless for all vital ends and the second turn to ashes. To exalt pleasure is to exalt pain; and we cannot understand the meaning of pain unless we understand the place of pleasure in the art of life. In England, James Hinton sought to make that clear, equally against those who failed to see that pain is as necessary morally as it undoubtedly is biologically, and against those who would puritanically refuse to accept the morality of pleasure.† It is no doubt important to resist pain, but it is also important that it should be there to resist. Even when we look at the matter no longer subjectively but objectively, we must accept pain in any sound æsthetic or metaphysical picture of the world.‡

* *Der Wille zur Macht*, p. 358.

† Mrs. Havelock Ellis, *James Hinton*, 1918.

‡ This has been well seen by Jules de Gaultier: 'The joys and the sorrows which fill life are, the one and the other,' he says (*La Dépendance de la Morale et l'Indépendance des Mœurs*, p. 340), 'elements of spectacular interest, and

We must not be surprised, therefore, that this way of looking at life as an art has spontaneously commended itself to men of the gravest and deepest character, in all other respects widely unlike. Shaftesbury was temperamentally a Stoic whose fragile constitution involved a perpetual endeavour to mould life to the form of his ideal. And if we go back to Marcus Aurelius we find an austere and heroic man whose life, as we trace it in his 'Meditations,' was a splendid struggle, a man who — even, it seems, unconsciously — had adopted the æsthetic criterion of moral goodness and the artistic conception of moral action. Dancing and wrestling express to his eyes the activity of the man who is striving to live, and the goodness of moral actions instinctively appears to him as the beauty of natural objects; it is to Marcus Aurelius that we owe that immortal utterance of æsthetic intuitionism: 'As though the emerald should say: "Whatever happens I must be emerald."' There could be no man more unlike the Roman Emperor, or in any more remote field of action, than the French saint and philanthropist Vincent de Paul. At once a genuine Christian mystic and a very wise and marvellously effective man of action, Vincent de Paul adopts precisely the same simile of the moral attitude that had long before been put forth by Plotinus and in the next century was again to be taken up by Shaftesbury: 'My daughters,' he wrote to the Sisters of Charity, 'we are each like a block of stone which is to be transferred into a statue. What must the sculptor do to carry out his design? First of all he must take the hammer and chip off all that he does not

without the mixture of both that interest would be abolished. To make of the representative worth of phenomena their justification in view of a spectacular end alone, avoids the objection by which the moral thesis is faced, the fact of pain. Pain becomes, on the contrary, the correlative of pleasure, an indispensable means for its realization. Such a thesis is in agreement with the nature of things, instead of being wounded by their existence.'

need. For this purpose he strikes the stone so violently that if you were watching him you would say he intended to break it to pieces. Then, when he has got rid of the rougher parts, he takes a smaller hammer, and afterwards a chisel, to begin the face with all the features. When that has taken form, he uses other and finer tools to bring it to that perfection he has intended for his statue.' If we desire to find a spiritual artist as unlike as possible to Vincent de Paul we may take Nietzsche. Alien as any man could ever be to a cheap or superficial vision of the moral life, and far too intellectually keen to confuse moral problems with purely æsthetic problems, Nietzsche, when faced by the problem of living, sets himself — almost as instinctively as Marcus Aurelius or Vincent de Paul — at the standpoint of art. 'Alles Leben ist Streit um Geschmack und Schmecken.' It is a crucial passage in 'Zarathustra': 'All life is a dispute about taste and tasting! Taste: that is weight and at the same time scales and weigher; and woe to all living things that would live without dispute about weight and scales and weigher!' For this gospel of taste is no easy gospel. A man must make himself a work of art, Nietzsche again and again declares, moulded into beauty by suffering, for such art is the highest morality, the morality of the Creator.

There is a certain indefiniteness about the conception of morality as an artistic impulse, to be judged by an æsthetic criterion, which is profoundly repugnant to at least two classes of minds fully entitled to make their antipathy felt. In the first place, it makes no appeal to the abstract reasoner, indifferent to the manifoldly concrete problems of living. For the man whose brain is hypertrophied and his practical life shrivelled to an insignificant routine — the man of whom Kant is the supreme type — it is always a temptation to rationalise morality. Such a pure intellectualist, overlooking the fact that human beings are not

mathematical figures, may even desire to transform ethics into a species of geometry. That we may see in Spinoza, a nobler and more inspiring figure, no doubt, but of the same temperament as Kant. The impulses and desires of ordinary men and women are manifold, inconstant, often conflicting, and sometimes overwhelming. 'Morality is a fact of sensibility,' remarks Jules de Gaultier; 'it has no need to have recourse to reason for its affirmations.' But to men of the intellectualist type this consideration is almost negligible; all the passions and affections of humanity seem to them meek as sheep which they may shepherd, and pen within the flimsiest hurdles. William Blake, who could cut down to that central core of the world where all things are fused together, knew better when he said that the only golden rule of life is 'the great and golden rule of art.' James Hinton was for ever expatiating on the close resemblance between the methods of art, as shown especially in painting, and the methods of moral action. Thoreau, who also belonged to this tribe, declared, in the same spirit as Blake, that there is no golden rule in morals, for rules are only current silver; 'it is golden not to have any rule at all.'

There is another quite different type of person who shares this antipathy to the indefiniteness of æsthetic morality: the ambitious moral reformer. The man of this class is usually by no means devoid of strong passions; but for the most part he possesses no great intellectual calibre and so is unable to estimate the force and complexity of human impulses. The moral reformer, eager to introduce the millennium here and now by the aid of the newest mechanical devices, is righteously indignant with anything so vague as an æsthetic morality. He must have definite rules and regulations, clear-cut laws and by-laws, with an arbitrary list of penalties attached, to be duly inflicted in this world or the next. The popular conception of Moses, descending

from the sacred mount with a brand-new table of commandments, which he declares have been delivered to him by God, though he is ready to smash them to pieces on the slightest provocation, furnishes a delightful image of the typical moral reformer of every age. It is, however, only in savage and barbarous stages of society, or among the uncultivated classes of civilisation, that the men of this type can find their faithful followers.

Yet there is more to be said. That very indefiniteness of the criterion of moral action, falsely supposed to be a disadvantage, is really the prime condition for effective moral action. The academic philosophers of ethics, had they possessed virility enough to enter the field of real life, would have realised — as we cannot expect the moral reformers blinded by the smoke of their own fanaticism to realise — that the slavery to rigid formulas which they preached was the death of all high moral responsibility. Life must always be a great adventure, with risks on every hand; a clear-sighted eye, a many-sided sympathy, a fine daring, an endless patience, are for ever necessary to all good living. With such qualities alone may the artist in life reach success; without them even the most devoted slave to formulas can only meet disaster. No reasonable moral being may draw breath in the world without an open-eyed freedom of choice, and if the moral world is to be governed by laws, better to people it with automatic machines than with living men and women.

In our human world the precision of mechanism is for ever impossible. The indefiniteness of morality is a part of its necessary imperfection. There is not only room in morality for the high aspiration, the courageous decision, the tonic thrill of the muscles of the soul, but we have to admit also sacrifice and pain. The lesser good, our own or that of others, is merged in a larger good, and that cannot be with-

out some rending of the heart. So all moral action, however in the end it may be justified by its harmony and balance, is in the making cruel and in a sense even immoral. Therein lies the final justification of the æsthetic conception of morality. It opens a wider perspective and reveals loftier standpoints; it shows how the seeming loss is part of an ultimate gain, so restoring that harmony and beauty which the unintelligent partisans of a hard and barren duty so often destroy for ever. 'Art,' as Paulhan declares, 'is often more moral than morality itself.' Or, as Jules de Gaultier holds, 'Art is in a certain sense the only morality which life admits.' In so far as we can infuse it with the spirit and method of art, we have transformed morality into something beyond morality; it has become the complete embodiment of the Dance of Life.

POPE

LYTTON STRACHEY

The great prestige of Mr. Lytton Strachey rests on his studies in biography. To the influence of his *Eminent Victorians*, strengthened by his life of Queen Victoria, is ascribed the enormous vogue now enjoyed by a fashion of biographical writing which imitates the art of the novelist, aiming at the imaginative reconstruction of the life and character of its subject rather than at a record of objective facts. It is commonly assumed that the new biography must be anti-heroic in temper and apply itself to the destruction of popular reputations and conventional estimates. Yet an attentive reader of *Eminent Victorians* will be aware that the great figures whom Mr. Strachey analyzes lose little of their heroic force in his treatment. The shock comes from the application to them of a different test from that which they or their contemporaries were in the habit of using. Under the searching intelligence of Mr. Strachey some of the weaknesses of Victorian morality come clearly into the light.

In his study of Pope Mr. Strachey displays the same qualities of aristocratic intelligence and acid wit that are found in his biographical studies and he displays also his distinguished accomplishments as a critic of literature. The peculiar mental gifts of the greatest wit and satirist of England could hardly fail to fascinate a mind like Mr. Strachey's. Besides, hardly any living English writer is more sensitively appreciative than he of the qualities of classical form. He has given evidence of it in his discussions of French literature, most notably in an essay on Racine, a poet in whom English readers very rarely are able to discern the greatness which his own countrymen acclaim. The significance of form or style as a constitutive factor of the innermost meaning of literature could hardly be presented more lucidly than in Mr. Strachey's analysis of Pope's heroic couplet as an

embodiment of that poet's "criticism of life." It should be studied alongside of Roger Fry's discussion of *The Artist and Psycho-Analysis*. (*Pope* was the Leslie Stephen Lecture for 1925, printed in England by The Cambridge University Press and in this country by Harcourt, Brace & Company.)

POPE

THE LESLIE STEPHEN LECTURE FOR 1925 *

AMONG the considerations that might make us rejoice or regret that we did not live in the eighteenth century, there is one that to my mind outbalances all the rest — if we had, we might have known Pope.* At any rate, we have escaped that. We may lament that flowered waistcoats are forbidden us, that we shall never ride in a sedan-chair, and that we shall never see good Queen Anne taking tea at Hampton Court; but we can at least congratulate ourselves that we run no danger of waking up one morning to find ourselves exposed, both now and forever, to the ridicule of the polite world — that we are hanging by the neck, and kicking our legs, on the elegant gibbet that has been put up for us by the little monster of Twit'nam. And, on the other hand, as it is, we are in the happy position of being able, quite imperturbably, to enjoy the fun. There is nothing so shamelessly selfish as posterity. To us, after two centuries, the agonies suffered by the victims of Pope's naughtiness are a matter of indifference; the fate of Pope's own soul leaves us cold. We sit at our ease, reading those *Satires* and *Epistles*, in which the verses, when they were written, resembled nothing so much as spoonfuls of boiling oil, ladled out by a fiendish monkey at an upstairs window upon such of the passers-by whom the wretch had a grudge against — and we are delighted. We would not have it otherwise; whatever is, is right.

In this there is nothing surprising; but what does seem

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strange is that Pope's contemporaries should have borne with him as they did. His attacks were by no means limited to Grub Street. He fell upon great lords and great ladies, duchesses and statesmen, noble patrons and beautiful women of fashion, with an equal ferocity; and such persons, in those days, were very well able to defend themselves. In France, the fate suffered by Voltaire, at that very time, and on far less provocation, is enough to convince us that such a portent as Pope would never have been tolerated on the other side of the Channel. The monkey would have been whipped into silence and good manners in double quick time. But in England it was different. Here, though "the Great," as they were called, were all-powerful, they preferred not to use their power against a libellous rhymer, who was physically incapable of protecting himself, and who, as a Roman Catholic, lay particularly open to legal pressure. The warfare between Pope and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu illustrates the state of affairs. The origin of their quarrel is uncertain. According to the lady, it was caused by her bursting into fits of laughter upon a declaration of passion from the poet. Another and perhaps more probable story traces the origin of the discord to a pair of sheets borrowed by Lady Mary from old Mrs. Pope, the poet's mother, and returned by her ladyship, after a fortnight, unwashed. But whatever may have been the hidden cause of the quarrel, its results were obvious enough. Pope, in one of his *Imitations of Horace*, made a reference to "Sappho," whom all the world knew to be Lady Mary, in a couplet of extraordinary scurrility. Always a master of the art of compression, he asserted, in a single line of ten syllables, that his enemy, besides being a slanderous virago, was a debauched woman afflicted with a disgraceful malady. If, after this, Lady Mary had sent her friends or her footmen to inflict a personal chastisement upon the poet, or if

she had used her influence with the government to have him brought to his senses, nobody could have been very much surprised. But she did nothing of the sort. Instead, she consulted with Lord Hervey, whom Pope had also attacked, and the two together decided to pay back their tormentor in his own coin. Accordingly they concocted and published a lampoon, in which they did their best to emulate both the style and substance of the poet.

"None," they declared,

> thy crabbed numbers can endure,
> Hard as thy heart, and as thy birth obscure.

It shows, they said,

> the Uniformity of Fate
> That one so odious should be born to hate.

And if

> Unwhipt, unblanketed, unlick'd, unslain,
> That wretched little carcase you retain,
> The reason is, not that the world wants eyes,
> But thou'rt so mean, they see and they despise.

After sixty lines of furious abuse, they wound up with a shrug of the shoulders, which was far from convincing—

> You strike unwounding, we unhurt can laugh,

they asserted. But for the unhurt this was certainly very odd laughter. It was also quite ineffective. Pope's first reply was a prose pamphlet, in which there is at least one amusing passage — "It is true, my Lord, I am short, not well shaped, generally ill-dressed, if not sometimes dirty. Your Lordship and Ladyship are still in bloom, your figures such as rival the Apollo of Belvedere and the Venus of Medici, and your faces so finished that neither sickness nor passion can deprive them of color." But, of course, he re-

served his most poisonous shafts for his poetry. Henceforth, his readers might be sure that in any especially unsavory couplet the name of Sappho would be found immortally embedded; while, as for Lord Hervey, he met his final doom in the character of Sporus — the most virulent piece of invective in the English language.

Lady Mary and Lord Hervey, clever as they were, had been so senseless as to try to fight Pope on his own ground, and, naturally enough, their failure was dismal. But why had they committed this act of folly? Their own explanation was the exact reverse of the truth. Far from despising the poet, they profoundly admired him. Hypnotised by his greatness, they were unable to prevent themselves from paying him the supreme compliment of an inept and suicidal imitation. And in this they were typical of the society in which they lived. That society was perhaps the most civilized that our history has known. Never, at any rate, before or since, has literature been so respected in England. Prior wrote well, and he became an ambassador. Addison wrote well, and he was made a Secretary of State. The Duke of Wharton gave Young £2,000 for having written a poem on the Universal Passion. Alderman Barber's great ambition was to be mentioned favorably by Pope. He let it be understood that he would be willing to part with £4,000 if the poet would gratify him; a single couplet was all he asked for; but the Alderman begged in vain. On the other hand, Pope accepted £1,000 from the old Duchess of Marlborough in return for the suppression of an attack upon the late Duke. Pope cancelled the lines; but soon afterwards printed an envenomed character of the Duchess. And even the terrific Sarah herself — such was the overwhelming prestige of the potentate of letters — was powerless in face of this affront.

For the first time in our history, a writer, who was a

writer and nothing more — Shakespeare was an actor and a theatrical manager — had achieved financial independence. Pope effected this by his translation of Homer, which brought him £9,000 — a sum equivalent to about £30,000 to-day. The immense success of this work was a sign of the times. Homer's reputation was enormous: was he not the father of poetry? The literary snobbery of the age was profoundly impressed by that. Yes, it was snobbery, no doubt; but surely it was a noble snobbery which put Homer so very high in the table of precedence — probably immediately after the Archbishop of Canterbury. Yet, there were difficulties. It was not only hard to read Homer, it was positively dangerous. Too close an acquaintance might reveal that the mythical figure sweeping along so grandly in front of the Archbishop of York was something of a blackguard — an alarming barbarian, with shocking tastes, small knowledge of the rules, and altogether far from correct. Pope solved these difficulties in a masterly manner. He supplied exactly what was wanted. He gave the eighteenth century a Homer after its own heart — a Homer who was the father — not quite of poetry, indeed, but of something much more satisfactory — of what the eighteenth century believed poetry to be; and, very properly, it gave him a fortune in return.

The eighteenth century has acquired a reputation for skepticism; but this is a mistake. In truth there has never been a less skeptical age. Its beliefs were rigid, intense, and imperturbable. In literature, as in every other department of life, an unquestioning orthodoxy reigned. It was this extraordinary self-sufficiency that gave the age its force; but the same quality caused the completeness of its downfall. When the reaction came, the absolute certainty of the past epoch seemed to invest it with the maximum degree of odium and absurdity. The romantics were men who had

lost their faith; and they rose against the old dispensation with all the zeal of rebels and heretics. Inevitably their fury fell with peculiar vehemence upon Pope. The great idol was overturned amid shouts of execration and scornful laughter. The writer who, for three generations, had divided with Milton the supreme honor of English poetry, was pronounced to be shallow, pompous, monotonous, meretricious, and not a poet at all.

Now that we have perhaps emerged from romanticism, it is time to consider the master of the eighteenth century with a more impartial eye. This is not altogether an easy task. Though we may be no longer in the least romantic, are we not still — I hesitate to suggest it — are we not still slightly Victorian? Do we not continue to cast glances of furtive admiration towards the pontiffs of that remarkable era, whose figures, on the edge of our horizon, are still visible, so lofty, and so large? We can discount the special pleadings of Wordsworth; but the voice of Matthew Arnold, for instance, still sounds with something like authority upon our ears. Pope, said Matthew Arnold, is not a classic of our poetry, he is a classic of our prose. He was without an "adequate poetic criticism of life"; his criticism of life lacked "high seriousness"; it had neither largeness, freedom, insight, nor benignity. Matthew Arnold was a poet, but his conception of poetry reminds us that he was also an inspector of schools. That the essence of poetry is "high seriousness" is one of those noble platitudes which commend themselves immediately as both obvious and comfortable. But, in reality, obviousness and comfort have very little to do with poetry. It is not the nature of poetry to be what anyone expects; on the contrary, it is its nature to be surprising, to be disturbing, to be impossible. Poetry and high seriousness! Of course, to Dr. Arnold's son, they seemed to be inevitably linked together; and certainly had

the world been created by Dr. Arnold they actually would have been. But — perhaps fortunately — it was not. If we look at the facts, where do we find poetry? In the wild fantasies of Aristophanes, in the sordid lusts of Baudelaire, in the gentle trivialities of La Fontaine.

> Dreadful was the din
> Of hissing through the hall, thick swarming now
> With complicated monsters, head and tail,
> Scorpion, and asp, and amphisbæna dire,
> Cerastes horn'd, hydrus, and ellops drear,
> And dipsas —

That is not high seriousness; it is a catalogue of curious names; and it is poetry. There is poetry to be found lurking in the metaphysical system of Epicurus, and in the body of a flea. And so need we be surprised if it invests a game of cards, or a gentleman sneezing at Hampton Court? —

> Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,
> A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw;
> The gnomes direct, to every atom just,
> The pungent grains of titillating dust.
> Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'erflows,
> And the high dome re-echoes to his nose.

Pope, we are told, was not only without "high seriousness"; he lacked no less an "adequate poetic criticism of life." What does this mean? The phrase is ambiguous; it signifies at once too much and too little. If we are to understand — as the context seems to imply — that, in Matthew Arnold's opinion, no poetic criticism of life can be adequate unless it possesses largeness, freedom, and benignity, we must certainly agree that Pope's poetic criticism of life was far from adequate; for his way of writing was neither large nor free, and there was nothing benignant about him.

But the words will bear another interpretation; and in this sense it may turn out that Pope's poetic criticism of life was adequate to an extraordinary degree.

Let us examine for a moment the technical instrument which Pope used — I mean the heroic couplet.

When he was a young man, the poet Walsh gave Pope a piece of advice. "We have had great poets," he said, "but never one great poet that was correct. I recommend you to make your leading aim — correctness." Pope took the advice, and became the most correct of poets. This was his chief title to glory in the eighteenth century; it was equally the stick that he was most frequently and rapturously beaten with, in the nineteenth. Macaulay, in his essay on Byron, devotes several pages of his best forensic style to an exposure and denunciation of the absurd futility of the "correctness" of the school of Pope. "There is in reality," he declared, "only one kind of correctness in literature — that which has its foundation in truth and in the principles of human nature." But Pope's so-called correctness was something very different. It consisted simply in a strict obedience to a perfectly arbitrary set of prosodic rules. His couplet was a purely artificial structure — the product of mere convention; and, so far from there being any possible poetic merit in the kind of correctness which it involved, this "correctness" was in fact only "another name for dullness and absurdity." A short time ago, the distinguished poet, M. Paul Valéry, demolished Macaulay's argument — no doubt quite unconsciously — in an essay full of brilliant subtlety and charming wit. He showed conclusively the essentially poetic value of purely arbitrary conventions. But, for our purposes, so drastic a conclusion is unnecessary. For Macaulay was mistaken, not only in his theory, but in his facts. The truth is that the English classic couplet — unlike the French — had nothing conventional about it.

On the contrary, it was the inevitable, the logical, the natural outcome of the development of English verse.

The fundamental element in the structure of poetry is rhythmical repetition. In England, the favorite unit of this repetition very early became the ten-syllabled iambic line. Now it is clear that the treatment of this line may be developed in two entirely different directions. The first of these developments is Blank Verse. Milton's definition of Blank Verse is well known, and it cannot be bettered: it consists, he says, "in apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another." Its essence, in other words, is the combination formed by rhythmical variety playing over an underlying norm; and it is easy to trace the evolution of this wonderful measure from the primitive rigidity of Surrey to the incredible virtuosity of Shakespeare's later plays, where Blank Verse reaches its furthest point of development — where the rhythmical variety is found in unparalleled profusion, while the underlying regularity is just, still, miraculously preserved. After Shakespeare, the combination broke down; the element of variety became so excessive that the underlying norm disappeared, with the result that the Blank Verse of the latest Elizabethans is virtually indistinguishable from prose.

But suppose the ten-syllabled iambic were treated in precisely the contrary manner. Suppose, instead of developing the element of variety to its maximum, the whole rhythmical emphasis were put upon the element of regularity. What would be the result? This was the problem that presented itself to the poets of the seventeenth century, when it appeared to them that the possibilities of Blank Verse were played out. (In reality they were not played out, as Milton proved; but Milton was an isolated and unique phenomenon.) Clearly, the most effective method of emphasising

regularity is the use of rhyme; and the most regular form of rhyme is the couplet. Already, in the splendid couplets of Marlowe and in the violent couplets of Donne, we can find a foretaste of what the future had in store for the measure. Shakespeare, indeed, as if to show that there were no limits either to his comprehension or to his capacity, threw off a few lines which might have been written by Pope and stuck them into the middle of *Othello*.* But it was not until the collapse of Blank Verse, about 1630, that the essential characteristics which lay concealed in the couplet began to be exploited. It was Waller who first fully apprehended the implications of regularity; and it is to this fact that his immense reputation during the succeeding hundred years was due. Waller disengaged the heroic couplet from the beautiful vagueness of Elizabethanism. He perceived what logically followed from a rhyme. He saw that regularity implied balance, that balance implied antithesis; he saw that balance also implied simplicity, that simplicity implied clarity and that clarity implied exactitude. The result was a poetical instrument contrary in every particular to Blank Verse — a form which, instead of being varied, unsymmetrical, fluid, complex, profound, and indefinite, was regular, balanced, antithetical, simple, clear, and exact. But, though Waller was its creator, the heroic couplet remained, with him, in an embryonic state. Its evolution was slow; even Dryden did not quite bring it to perfection. That great genius, with all his strength and all his brilliance, lacked one quality without which no mastery of the couplet could be complete — the elegance

* She that in wisdom never was so frail
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail;
She that could think, and ne'er disclose her mind;
See suitors following, and not look behind;
She was a wight, if ever such wight were,
To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.

of perfect finish. This was possessed by Pope. The most correct of poets — Pope was indeed that; it is his true title to glory. But the phrase does not mean that he obeyed more slavishly than anybody else a set of arbitrary rules. No, it means something entirely different: it means that the system of versification of which the principle is regularity reached in Pope's hands the final plenitude of its nature — its ultimate significance — its supreme consummation.

That Pope's verse is artificial there can be no doubt. But then there is only one kind of verse that is not artificial, and that is, bad verse. Yet it is true that there is a sense in which Pope's couplet is more artificial than, let us say, the later Blank Verse of Shakespeare — it has less resemblance to nature. It is regular and neat; but nature is *divers et ondoyant;* and so is Blank Verse. Nature and Blank Verse are complicated; and Pope's couplet is simplicity itself. But what a profound art underlies that simplicity! Pope's great achievement in English literature was the triumph of simplification. In one of his earliest works, the *Pastorals*, there is simplicity and nothing else; Pope had understood that if he could once attain to a perfect simplicity, all the rest would follow in good time —

> O deign to visit our forsaken seats,
> The mossy fountains, and the green retreats!
> Where'er you walk, cool gales shall fan the glade;
> Trees, where you sit, shall crowd into a shade;
> Where'er you tread, the blushing flow'rs shall rise,
> And all things flourish where you turn your eyes.

The lines flow on with the most transparent limpidity —

> But see, the shepherds shun the noon-day heat,
> The lowing herds to murm'ring brooks retreat,
> To closer shades the panting flocks remove;
> Ye Gods! and is there no relief for love?

Everything is obvious. The diction is a mass of *clichés;* the epithets are the most commonplace possible; the herds low, the brooks murmur, the flocks pant and remove, the retreats are green, and the flowers blush. The rhythm is that of a rocking-horse; and the sentiment is mere sugar. But what a relief! What a relief to have escaped for once from *le mot propre*, from subtle elaboration of diction and metre, from complicated states of mind, and all the profound obscurities of Shakespeare and Mr. T. S. Eliot! How delightful to have no trouble at all — to understand so very, very easily every single thing that is said!

This is Pope at his most youthful. As he matured, his verse matured with him. Eventually, his couplets, while retaining to the full their early ease, polish, and lucidity, became charged with an extraordinary weight. He was able to be massive, as no other wielder of the measure has ever been —

> Lo! thy dread empire, Chaos! is restored;
> Light dies before thy uncreating word;
> Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall,
> And universal Darkness buries All.

Here the slow solemnity of the effect is produced by a most learned accumulation of accents and quantities; in some of the lines all the syllables save two are either long or stressed. At other times, he uses a precisely opposite method; in line after line he maintains, almost completely, the regular alternation of accented and unaccented syllables; and so conveys a wonderful impression of solidity and force. —

> Proceed, great days! till learning fly the shore,
> Till Birth shall blush with noble blood no more,
> Till Thames see Eton's sons for ever play,
> Till Westminster's whole year be holiday,
> Till Isis' Elders reel, their pupils' sport,
> And Alma Mater lie dissolved in Port!

Perhaps the most characteristic of all the elements in the couplet is antithesis. Ordinary regularity demands that the sense should end with every line — that was a prime necessity; but a more scrupulous symmetry would require something more — a division of the line itself into two halves, whose meanings should correspond. And yet a further refinement was possible: each half might be again divided, and the corresponding divisions in the two halves might be so arranged as to balance each other. The force of neatness could no further go; and thus the most completely evolved type of the heroic line is one composed of four main words arranged in pairs, so as to form a double antithesis.

Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike

is an example of such a line, and Pope's poems are full of them. With astonishing ingenuity he builds up these exquisite structures, in which the parts are so cunningly placed that they seem to interlock spontaneously, and, while they are all formed on a similar model, are yet so subtly adjusted that they produce a fresh pleasure as each one appears. But that is not all. Pope was pre-eminently a satirist. He was naturally drawn to the contemplation of human beings, their conduct in society, their characters, their motives, their destinies; and the feelings which these contemplations habitually aroused in him were those of scorn and hatred. Civilization illumined by animosity — such was his theme; such was the passionate and complicated material from which he wove his patterns of balanced precision and polished clarity. Antithesis penetrates below the structure; it permeates the whole conception of his work. Fundamental opposites clash, and are reconciled. The profundities of persons, the futilities of existence, the rage and spite of genius — these things are mixed together, and presented to our eyes in the shape of a Chinese box. The essence of

all art is the accomplishment of the impossible. This cannot be done, we say; and it *is* done. What has happened? A magician has waved his wand. It is impossible that Pope should convey to us his withering sense of the wretchedness and emptiness of the fate of old women in society, in five lines, each containing four words, arranged in pairs, so as to form a double antithesis. But the magician waves his wand, and there it is —

> See how the world its veterans rewards!
> A youth of frolics, an old age of cards;
> Fair to no purpose, artful to no end,
> Young without lovers, old without a friend,
> A fop their fashion, and their prize a sot;
> Alive ridiculous, and dead forgot!

And now, perhaps, we have discovered what may truly be said to have been Pope's "poetic criticism of life." His poetic criticism of life was, simply and solely, the heroic couplet.

Pope was pre-eminently a satirist; and so it is only natural that his enemies should take him to task for not being something else. He had no benignity; he had no feeling for sensuous beauty; he took no interest in nature; he was pompous — did he not wear a wig? Possibly; but if one is to judge poets by what they are without, where is one to end? One might point out that Wordsworth had no sense of humor, that Shelley did not understand human beings, that Keats could not read Greek, and that Matthew Arnold did not wear a wig. And, if one looks more closely, one perceives that there were a good many things that Pope could do very well — when he wanted to. Sensuous beauty, for instance —

> Die of a rose in aromatic pain.

If that is not sensuously beautiful, what is? Then, we are told, he did not "compose with his eyes on the object."

But once Pope looked at a spider, and this was what he composed —

> The spider's touch how exquisitely fine!
> Feels at each thread, and lives along the line.

Could Wordsworth have done better? It is true that he did not often expatiate upon the scenery; but, when he chose, he could call up a vision of nature which is unforgettable —

> Lo! where Mæotis sleeps, and hardly flows
> The freezing Tanais thro' a waste of snows,

We see, and we shiver. It cannot be denied that Pope wore a wig; it must even be confessed that there are traces, in his earlier work especially, of that inexpressive ornament in the rococo style, which was the bane of his age; but the true Pope was not there. The true Pope threw his wig into the corner of the room, and used all the plainest words in the dictionary. He used them carefully, no doubt, very carefully, but he used them — one-syllabled, Saxon words, by no means pretty — they cover his pages; and some of his pages are among the coarsest in English literature. There are passages in the *Dunciad* which might agitate Mr. James Joyce. Far from being a scrupulous worshipper of the noble style, Pope was a realist — in thought and in expression. He could describe a sordid interior as well as any French novelist —

> In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half-hung,
> The doors of plaster, and the walls of dung,
> On once a flock-bed but repair'd with straw,
> With tape-tied curtains, never meant to draw,
> The George and Garter dangling from that bed
> Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
> Great Villiers lies. . . .

But these are only the outworks of the citadel. The heart of the man was not put into descriptions of physical things; it was put into descriptions of people whom he disliked. It is in those elaborate Characters, in which, through a score of lines or so, the verse rises in wave upon wave of malice, to fall at last with a crash on the devoted head of the victim — in the sombre magnificence of the denunciation of the great dead Duke, in the murderous insolence of the attack on the great living Duchess, in the hooting mockery of Bufo, in the devastating analysis of Addison — it is here that Pope's art comes to its climax. With what a relish, with what a thrill, we behold once more the impossible feat — the couplet, that bed of Procrustes, fitted exactly and eternally with the sinuous egoism of Addison's spirit, or the putrescent nothingness of Lord Hervey's. In the character of Sporus, says the great critic and lexicographer, in memory of whom I have had the honor of addressing you to-day, "Pope seems to be actually screaming with malignant fury." It is true.

> Let Sporus tremble! — What? that thing of silk,
> Sporus, that mere white curd of ass's milk?
> Satire of sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
> Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
> — Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
> This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings;
> Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
> Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys:
> So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
> In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
> Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
> As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
> Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
> And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks,
> Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
> Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad

In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies.
His wit all see-saw, between that and this,
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
And he himself one vile antithesis.
Amphibious thing! that acting either part,
The trifling head, or the corrupted heart,
Fop at the toilet, flatterer at the board,
Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.
Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins have expressed,
A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest;
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none can trust,
Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust.

It is true: Pope seems to be actually screaming; but let us not mistake. It is only an appearance; actually, Pope is not screaming at all; for these are strange impossible screams, unknown to the world of fact — screams, endowed with immortality. What has happened then? Pope has waved his wand. He has turned his screams into poetry, with the enchantment of the heroic couplet.

THE ARTIST AND PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

ROGER FRY

Mr. Roger Fry's essay brings into the centre of discussion two problems which are of great concern to the student of art and literature in our time. One is raised by the attempt of psycho-analysis to explain artistic creation as an outcome of the sexual instinct or as an escape from an unfriendly reality into a world of dreams and wish-fulfilments. In repudiating this theory Mr. Fry is led to formulate his own conception of the conscious purpose of the artist, and this formulation brings up the second and more permanently interesting of the two problems — the relation of substance to form in art. Form, according to Mr. Fry, is the only thing with which the artist is concerned. The public which, in reading a poem or looking at a picture, gets its pleasure from the subject, the story, the thought, or from any of the various emotional associations aroused by these things, is not getting an artistic enjoyment at all. In Mr. Fry a few glass bottles painted on an apothecary's sign by Chardin, an eighteenth-century French painter of still life, arouse a feeling as grand and impressive as "the tremendous images of Sybils and Prophets" with which Michelangelo has decorated the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. To the layman this view may appear shocking and disturbing, but there can be no question of Mr. Fry's competence to speak on the subject. He is himself a distinguished painter and has earned a solid reputation as an expert critic of painting, particularly in its modern formal tendencies. But whatever the truth or importance of the idea, one could hardly ask to have it stated with more uncompromising distinctness or with more direct and forcible illustration. For its attitude toward art the essay may be instructively compared with Ruskin's *Cambridge Inaugural Address* on the one hand, and on the other with Mr. Lytton Strachey's interpretation of Pope. (*The Artist and Psycho-Analysis* was published in *Hogarth Essays*, 1928.)

THE ARTIST AND PSYCHO-ANALYSIS*

AS I am no psychologist, my presumption in addressing a gathering of professional psychologists seems to call for apology. My defence is that of late years you have managed to make yourselves so interesting to the world at large that you have inevitably attracted the attention of outsiders. You have let off too many fireworks in your back garden to wonder that strangers have been looking over the wall.

Before the advent of Dr. Freud you worked for so long in a tranquil and almost deserted solitude that this invasion of your privacy may be a strange and disturbing experience. As an artist let me assure you that you will get accustomed to it, for we artists have always been absurdly interesting to the outside world, and are, a good many of us, by no means averse from these self-invited guests in our workshops. And to be perfectly frank psychologists are the latest disturbers of our rest and threaten to be not the least importunate.

That is one reason why I thought it might be profitable if we arranged together the terms on which you would be not only admitted, but welcomed. Those terms are very simple, they consist of one clause, namely, that before you tell us what we are doing and why we do it, we think you should take the trouble to understand what we think we are doing and why we think we do it. I know how impatient doctors are while the patient is going through his symptoms but he

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does generally make that concession to human nature. If after that, you can show us that we have got a mistaken notion of our own activities, that we have unconsciously rationalized them and in doing so disguised their true significance, we will listen in all humility.

What I have to suggest to you to-night is rather complicated. I will therefore begin by summarizing briefly my main ideas.

(1) The words "art" and "artist" are simple enough, but alas they have no sharply defined usage. Artists are a group of people of very different temperaments and some of them are actuated by quite different motives, and exercise quite different psychical activities, from others.

(2) I believe that two distinct aims and activities have got classed together under the word "art," and that the word "artist" is used of two distinct groups of men. One of these groups into which I would divide artists is mainly preoccupied with creating a fantasy-world in which the fulfilment of wishes is realized. The other is concerned with the contemplation of formal relations. I believe this latter activity to be as much detached from the instinctive life as any human activity that we know; to be in that respect on a par with science. I consider this latter the distinctive esthetic activity. I admit that to some extent these two aims may both appear in any given work of art but I believe them to be fundamentally different, if not in their origins, at least in their functions.

To begin with let us get clear about the question of origins. No doubt the question of the origin of any phenomenon is of great interest and importance, but it must always be borne in mind that the discovery of the origin is not an explanation of the phenomenon. Origins do not necessarily explain functions. The alimentary canal and the brain both have their origin in the epithelial tissue, but one would give

an enquirer a strange idea of the functional importance of the brain in the economy of the body if one only stated that it was originally part of the skin.

So if you were to prove that art originated in the sexual feelings of man, that might be a very important and interesting discovery, but it would be no explanation of the significance of art for human life. Not what an organ came from, but what it has come to be, is the most important consideration, though what it came from, and the path it has taken in its progress, may throw a light on what it really is. As an instance take the case of language. Dr. Freud in his lectures quotes a theory of language which I am not qualified to criticize or approve but which sounds to me plausible — it is that when men began to work in groups at wood-cutting, building, or what not, they sweetened their toil by shouting together sounds that had a sexual significance and that gradually these sounds became dissociated from sex and associated with particular actions or objects, and thus the original roots of language came into being. Now to argue from this that language is merely a function of the sex instinct would be grotesque. Since it has come to be the vehicle for the whole discursive intellectual life of man — it has come to serve most of all precisely those activities which are most completely removed from the instinctive life. Indeed all human activities must presumably have their ultimate origins in some part of the purely animal and instinctive life of our earliest ancestors.

Science itself, the activity of the pure reflective intellect, no doubt comes from a gradual misapplication and distortion of what was once only a weapon in the struggle for life. What was once hardly more than the animal ingenuity, which enabled man to contrive elementary devices for protection or shelter, has become through that very process of

misapplication the purely reflective and disinterested intellectual power of an Einstein or a Freud, and we can show almost every intermediate stage in this long process. Now if you wanted to investigate the real nature of this truth-seeking passion of scientific men, it might be important, no doubt, to discover when it first branched off from the instinctive ratiocination of animals, but you could say nothing about its significance unless you studied it beyond the point where it had lost all traces of its subservience to the instinctive life. To understand the scientific activity you must note that its essence is precisely this complete detachment from the instinctive life, its complete uselessness, its abiological nature, since it exists not to serve life but truth, and this is precisely why those who devote themselves to this activity are constantly in conflict with the mass of mankind which is deeply concerned with life and completely indifferent to truth.

Now one of the pleas I want to make to you is that, if you wish to discover something about the nature of artistic activity, you should study it at a stage where it has thrown off the traces of its origin, has run clear, as it were, of all these accessory accompaniments which surround and, perhaps, cloak it in its earlier stages.

There is such a thing as impure or useful science, and, if you were to analyze that activity, you would find all sorts of biological motives at work, although the fundamental truth-seeking passion of pure science is distinguished precisely by its independence of, and its indifference to, biological necessity.

Similarly there is an impure and, perhaps, useful art (though the use of impure art is not so easily demonstrated as that of impure science); here too, analysis would reveal a number of elements which really form no part of the essential esthetic activity, and you will make a serious mistake

if, after such an analysis, you declare these to be constituent parts of that phenomenon.

If you have a substance which you know to be chemically pure it is clear that you have a right to say that every element which you discover in that substance by analysis is a constituent part of it, but, if you have any reason to suspect an impure mixture, you know that any particular element which the analysis reveals may be due to the impurity and form no part of the substance which you are investigating.

Now that the esthetic activity does mix in various degrees with a number of other activities is surely evident. Take for instance advertisements: many of these show no esthetic effort and do not even try to afford esthetic pleasure; they merely convey more or less inaccurate information about a particular object. You can think of advertisements where not only are the merits of the objects enumerated but the object, let us say a bottle of Somebody's Beer, is depicted. Every detail of the bottle and its label is given so that we may recognize it when we see it in the bar, but there is no sign that in the manner of representation any thought has been expended for our esthetic pleasure. On the other hand I take certain advertisements in American journals, where advertisements are taken seriously and romantically, and I find a very genuine effort, in the proportion and spacing of the letters, in the harmonious consistence of the forms, and in the exact presentation of the object, towards esthetic pleasure. None the less this esthetic appeal is mixed with all sorts of appeals to other feelings than the love of beauty — appeals to our sense of social prestige, to our avarice, to our desire for personal display, and so forth.

Or take again the case of dress — here no doubt there is often a considerable care for pure beauty of line and harmony of colour, but such considerations have continually to

give place to far more pressing concerns connected with social rivalry, in fact to all the complicated mass of instincts which go to make up what we call snobbishness.

These, then, are cases of obvious mixtures, in which the esthetic impulse has a part — but you will say these belong to applied art; if we take pictures which subserve no ultimate use we shall surely be safe. But alas the vast majority of pictures are not really works of art at all. No doubt in most a careful analysis would reveal some trace of esthetic preoccupations, but for the most part the appeal they make is to quite other feelings.

For the moment I must be dogmatic and declare that the esthetic emotion is an emotion about form. In certain people, purely formal relations of certain kinds arouse peculiarly profound emotions, or rather I ought to say the recognition by them of particular kinds of formal relations arouse these emotions. Now these emotions about forms may be accompanied by other emotions which have to do more or less with what I call the instinctive life.

The simplest examples of this can be taken from music. If, as frequently happens, an unmusical child strikes six notes in succession on the piano, the chances are that no one would be able to perceive any necessary relation between these notes — they have been struck by accident, as we say. But if I strike the first six notes of "God Save the King," every one who is not quite music-deaf recognizes that they have, as one would say, a meaning, a purpose. They occur in such a sequence that after each note has been struck we feel that only certain notes can follow and, as the notes follow one another, they more or less adequately fulfil our expectation, *i.e.*, from the beginning the idea of a formal design or scheme is impressed on our minds, and anything which departed violently from that would be not merely meaningless, but an outrage to our sense of order

and proportion. We have then an immediate recognition of formal design, of a trend in every part towards a single unity or complete thing which we call the tune.

Now let us suppose that you hear "God Save the King" for the first time; it is possible that you would get an emotion from the mere recognition of that formal system. I do not say it would be a very profound or important emotion, but it might be an emotion, and it would probably stir up no image whatever in your mind, would be associated with no particular person or thing or idea. But those particular notes have become associated with many other things in our minds, so that when they are played we no longer can fix our minds on the form, we are instantly invaded by the associated feelings of loyalty, devotion to country, boredom from the memory of tiresome functions, or relief that we can now at least leave the theatre. We shall say that that particular formal design of notes has become symbolical of numerous other things with which it has become associated.

Now this simple case presents in easy form some of the problems which confront us in works of art of all kinds. The form of a work of art has a meaning of its own and the contemplation of the form in and for itself gives rise in some people to a special emotion which does not depend upon the association of the form with anything else whatever. But that form may by various means either by casual opposition or by some resemblance to things or people or ideas in the outside world, become intimately associated in our minds with those other things, and if these things are objects of emotional feeling, we shall get from the contemplation of the form the echo of all the feelings belonging to the associated objects.

Now since very few people are so constituted by nature or training as to have developed the special feeling about formal design, and since everyone has in the course of his life

accumulated a vast mass of feeling about all sorts of objects, persons, and ideas, for the greater part of mankind the associated emotions of a work of art are far stronger than the purely esthetic ones.

So far does this go that they hardly notice the form, but pass at once into the world of associated emotions which that form calls up in them. Thus, to go back to our example, the vast majority of people have no notion whether the form of "God Save the King" is finely constructed and capable of arousing esthetic emotion or not. They have never, properly speaking, heard the form because they have always passed at once into that richly varied world of racial and social emotion which has gathered round it.

And what is true of certain pieces of music is even more true of the graphic arts. Here we have forms which quite visibly resemble certain objects in nature, and not unfrequently these objects, such for instance as a beautiful woman, are charged for us with a great deal of emotion. When to this we add that people are far less sensitive to the meaning of visible formal design than they are to audible design, we need not be surprised that pictures are almost always estimated for qualities which have nothing, or almost nothing, to do with their formal design or their esthetic quality in the strict sense.

To satisfy this emotional pleasure in the associated ideas of images which the mass of mankind feel so strongly there has arisen a vast production of pictures, writings, music, etc., in which formal design is entirely subordinated to the excitation of the emotions associated with objects. And this is what we may call popular, commercial, or impure art, and to this category belongs nowadays the vast majority of so called artistic productions. On the other hand in each generation there are likely to be a certain number of people who have a sensitiveness to purely formal relations. To

such people these relations have meaning and arouse keen emotions of pleasure. And these people create such systems of formal relations and do not sacrifice willingly or consciously anything of those formal relations to the arousing of emotions connected with objects in the outside world. Their whole attention is directed towards establishing the completest relationship of all parts within the system of the work of art.

It so happens that these systems of formal relations the meaning of which is apprehended by a comparatively few people in each generation, have a curious vitality and longevity, whereas those works in which appeal is made chiefly to the associated ideas of images rarely survive the generation for whose pleasure they were made. This may be because the emotions about objects change more rapidly than the emotions about form. But whatever the reason, the result is that the accumulated and inherited artistic treasure of mankind is made up almost entirely of those works in which formal design is the predominant consideration.

This contrast between the nature of inherited art and the mass of contemporary art has become so marked that the word "classic" is often used (loosely and incorrectly, no doubt) to denote work which has this peculiar character. People speak of classical music, for instance, when they mean the works of any of the great composers. It is significant of the rarity of comprehension of such formal design that to many people classical music is almost synonymous with "dull" music.

Now what I want to put before you is that the purposes and methods of these two kinds of art and of the two kinds of artist that produce them are so different — in so many ways so diametrically opposed that when you set out to analyze the nature and function of art by psychological tests, you must know which kind you are dealing with and

you must keep your results in separate pigeon-holes or else you will only make confusion worse confounded.

Before I go any further I will turn to what one or two of the psychological authorities have said on the subject. I quote the passage in his introduction to Psycho-Analysis in which Dr. Freud speaks of the artist. This is what he says: —

Before you leave to-day I should like to direct your attention for a moment to a side of phantasy-life of very general interest. There is, in fact a path from phantasy back again to reality, and that is — art. The artist has also an introverted disposition and has not far to go to become neurotic. He is one who is urged on by instinctive needs which are too clamorous; he longs to attain to honour, power, riches, fame, and the love of women; but he lacks the means of achieving these gratifications. So, like any other with an unsatisfied longing, he turns away from reality and transfers all his interest, and all his Libido, too, on to the creation of his wishes in life. There must be many factors in combination to prevent this becoming the whole outcome of his development; it is well known how often artists in particular suffer from partial inhibition of their capacities through neurosis. Probably their constitution is endowed with a powerful capacity fo sublimation and with a certain flexibility in the repressions determining the conflict. But the way back to reality is found by the artist thus: He is not the only one who has a life of phantasy; the intermediate world of phantasy is sanctioned by general human consent, and every hungry soul looks to it for comfort and consolation. But to those who are not artists the gratification that can be drawn from the springs of phantasy is very limited; their inexorable repressions prevent the enjoyment of all but the meagre day-dreams which can become conscious. A true artist has more at his disposal. First of all he understands how to elaborate his day-dreams, so that they lose that personal note which grates upon strange ears and becomes enjoyable to others; he knows too how to modify them sufficiently so that their origin in prohibited sources is not easily detected. Further, he possesses the mysterious ability to mould his particular material until it expresses the idea of his phantasy faithfully; and then he knows how

to attach to this reflection of his phantasy-life so strong a stream of pleasure that, for a time at least, the repressions are out-balanced and dispelled by it. When he can do all this, he opens out to others the way back to the comfort and consolation of their own unconscious sources of pleasure, and so reaps their gratitude and admiration; then he has won — through his phantasy — what before he could only win in phantasy, honour, power, and the love of women.

I must ask you to believe that any criticism I make on this passage is not actuated by motives of personal pique. To be called introverted and on the brink of being neurotic does not seriously affect me. Indeed ever since I observed that the only people worth talking to, the only agreeable companions, belonged to the class that morbidly healthy, censorious people classed as neurotic and degenerate, these words have lost all terror for me. All the same I must declare that the portrait of the artist here given is drawn on the lines of a widespread popular fallacy about the "artistic temperament."

Most people lead dull, monotonous, and conventional lives with inadequate satisfaction of their libido, and one of their favourite phantasies is that of the Bohemian — the gay, reckless, devil-may-care fellow who is always kicking over the traces and yet gets toleration and even consideration from the world by reason of a purely magic gift called genius. Now this creature is not altogether a myth — he or something like him does undoubtedly exist — he frequently practises art but he is generally a second-rate artist. He may even be a very brilliant and successful one, but he is none the less a very minor artist. On the other hand, almost all the artists who have done anything approaching first-rate work have been thoroughly bourgeois people — leading quiet, unostentatious lives, indifferent to the world's praise or blame, and far too much interested in their job to spend their time in kicking over the traces.

Now all through this passage Dr. Freud is giving us the picture of such a brilliant, successful, and essentially impure artist — I need not say that I used the words "pure" and "impure" in a strictly esthetic sense without any reference to sexual morality — *i.e.*, he is an artist who realizes the dream world wherein he and his admirers find an ideal satisfaction of their unsatisfied instincts. He creates images and situations which belong to this dream world wherein we are free to play the rôle which we all think we have somehow missed in actual life.

It is quite true that this explains nearly all contemporary artistic creation. You have only to think of the average novel, especially the feuilleton of papers like the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror*, and others, which supply every day their pittance of imagined romantic love to hungry girl clerks and housemaids. In fact I believe the most successful and widely read of these (mostly lady) novelists do generally day-dream in print, as it were; nothing else would account for their astounding productivity. These people have the fortunate gift of dreaming the average person's day-dream so that the wish-fulfilment which comes natural to them coincides precisely with the wish-fulfilment of a vast number of the population. Other less fortunate writers have deliberately and consciously to concoct the sort of day-dream that they believe the public want, and these can never be quite the best-sellers.

None of these conditions apply to any first-rate novel — the novels that have endured do not represent wish-fulfilment to any considerable extent. They depend on the contrary for their effect upon a peculiar detachment from the instinctive life. Instead of manipulating reality so as to conform to the libido, they note the inexorable sequence in life of cause and effect, they mark the total indifference of fate to all human desires, and they endeavour to derive

precisely from that inexorability of fate an altogether different kind of pleasure — the pleasure which consists in the recognition of *inevitable sequences;* a pleasure which you see corresponds to the pleasure which we found in marking the inevitable sequence of the notes in a tune; in fact again a pleasure derived from the contemplation of the relations and correspondences of form. To give you instances — no one who hoped to get an ideal wish-fulfilment would go to *Mme. Bovary* or *Anna Karenina* or even *Vanity Fair.*

Another immense art industry of to-day is the Cinema, and here too wish-fulfilment reigns supreme. I remember an advertisement of a Cinema with the legend "Let us live a life in two hours." This was a clear appeal to the desire to realize ideally what reality had denied, and indeed there can be no doubt about the method and purpose of nearly all the films, at least such as are not definitely comic, since the comic introduces another problem which I cannot go into now.

By a process which is mere child's play in the dream life we instantly identify ourselves with the hero, and then what satisfaction we attain! With what incredible skill and what incredible good fortune we foil the villain's plot against the heroine, arrive in the nick of time to shoot him dead, and ride off with the heroine either insensible from fear or just able to cling to us for dear life as we cross terrible ravines on a fallen tree-trunk, scale precipices and crash through forests, and always with the certainty of ultimate and triumphant success! But I needn't labour the point; the theatre with its audience always clamorous for a happy ending is no less obvious a case.

What is more interesting is the question of the real artist's attitude to all this; for, in so far as he has to depend on his art for his living, he is under the hard compulsion of throwing a sop to the public, and therefore of giving some satis-

faction to the dream-life in his creations. The whole question of the artistic conscience centres round this point. It so happens that some great artists have had rather easy artistic consciences. Dickens is a noteworthy case of this and you all know how he deliberately and consciously spoiled one of his novels by yielding to the clamour of the public and giving it a happy ending, though by doing so he broke the sequence which he knew to be esthetically inevitable.

But the mere fact that there is such a conflict between the artist and the general public is a proof that, qua-artist, the creator has other aims than that of wish-fulfilment and that the pleasure which he feels is not thus directly connected with the libido.

Freud, however daring some of his generalizations may be, is a man of scrupulous intellectual integrity, and he has generally avoided treating the question of esthetics and the artistic impulse, knowing, I suppose, that he has not the necessary sensibility and understanding. But other psycho-analysts have gone further. Dr. Jung devotes a chapter of his psychological types to the artist. I wish I could criticize this, but I frankly confess I do not understand what it is about. Nothing that he says corresponds to any kind of experience which I or, I suspect, any of the artists I have ever known have ever had. In fact, I can find no connection at all with real experience so that I must simply leave it on one side, merely noting by the way that, according to Jung, Western Art implies an extravert attitude and Eastern Art an introvert attitude (Freud you will remember makes all artists introvert). Anyone who knows Oriental and Western Art at all intimately must shudder at the temerity of any such generalization.

I quite recognize that a certain positive turn of mind makes me unfitted to follow Jung's speculations and that

I am perhaps unfairly neglecting him. I turn to Dr. Pfister and here, too, I will confess to a certain prejudice. I find, according to him, that psycho-analysis can only be safely practised by Christians, — all other religions are dissolved by the destructive activity of psycho-analysis — but the Christian religion has the mysterious power of remaining insoluble. This hardly reassures me that Dr. Pfister possesses that intellectual impartiality which Freud so rightly claims as the chief weapon of the man of science.

Well, Dr. Pfister has a chapter on Psycho-Analysis and Art. He had the opportunity to analyze a youth of eighteen, who had apparently come to him for treatment and who was frequently disposed to paint pictures. I will read you a description of a typical example, "The Bridge of Death."

"A youth is about to leap away from a female corpse on to a bridge lost in a sea of fog, in the midst of which Death is standing. Behind him the sun rises in blood-red splendour. On the right margin two pairs of hands are trying to recall or hold back the hurrying youth!"

Would you like one more, "Night's Highest Hope?"

"Night sits as a mother on a rock holding her child on high. Around her lie 'spirits of the night' holding out their hands to her like praying Mohammedans. Rosy-tipped clouds announce the approaching dawn."

As a result of prolonged investigation of such works Dr. Pfister arrives at the conclusion that: —

"Artistic or poetic inspiration is to be regarded as the manifestation of repressed desires and, as such, formed in accordance with the laws by which Freud grouped the processes participating in the origin of neurotic symptoms, dreams, hallucinations, and related phenomena, save that a whole is created, the deeper psychological significance of which, however, is not perfectly clear to the artist."

"Everything was present," he adds, "poetic creation,

substitution, dramatization. The most intensive use was made of symbolism."

"Everything was present," I should add, except the faintest glimmer of any artistic feeling. The one thing I should know about this interesting young man's drawings would have been the extreme improbability that he would ever be the least good as an artist.

Indeed from time to time my advice is asked about the drawings of unhappy and dissatisfied young men and women, drawings which are not altogether unlike the improvisations of this Swiss boy, and I invariably recommend them not to take up art, because I know that real artists, even if they are destined to paint highly imaginative works and to go mad in the end like Van Gogh, generally begin by making an elaborate study of an old pair of boots or something of that kind.

I do not for a moment doubt the value of Dr. Pfister's analysis from the point of view of understanding the nervous troubles of his patient. I should think, indeed, that they would be in effect as useful as the study of his dreams, but, precisely in proportion as they were valuable as indications of the patient's dream life, they are worthless as indications of the nature of real art.

For I come back to this, that nothing is more contrary to the essential esthetic faculty than the dream. The poet Mallarmé foresaw this long before Freud had revealed the psychological value of dreams, for in his poem in memory of Théophile Gautier he says that "the spirit of Gautier, the pure poet, now watches over the garden of poetry from which he banishes the Dream, the enemy of his charge." You notice that in this connection he calls him deliberately the pure poet, knowing that in proportion as poetry becomes impure it accepts the Dream. You notice also that Dr. Pfister quite unknowingly betrays how little he knows what

art is really about when he says of his patients' work that the most extensive use is made of symbolism. I have elsewhere expressed the belief that in a world of symbolists only two kinds of people are entirely opposed to symbolism, and they are the man of science and the artist, since they alone are seeking to make constructions which are completely self-consistent, self-supporting and self-contained — constructions which do not stand for something else, but appear to have ultimate value and in that sense to be real.

It is, of course, perfectly natural that people should always be looking for symbolism in works of art. Since most people are unable to perceive the meaning of purely formal relations, are unable to derive from them the profound satisfaction that the creator and those that understand him feel, they always look for some meaning that can be attached to the values of actual life, they always hope to translate a work of art into terms of *ideas* with which they are familiar. None the less, in proportion as an artist is pure he is opposed to all symbolism.

You will have noticed that in all these psycho-analytical enquiries into pictorial art the attention of the investigator is fixed on the nature of the images, on what choice the painter has made of the object he represents. Now I venture to say that no one who has a real understanding of the art of painting attaches any importance to what we call the subject of a picture — what is represented. To one who feels the language of pictorial form all depends on *how* it is presented, *nothing* on what. Rembrandt expressed his profoundest feelings just as well when he painted a carcass hanging up in a butcher's shop as when he painted the Crucifixion or his mistress. Cézanne whom most of us believe to be the greatest artist of modern times expressed some of his grandest conceptions in pictures of fruit and crockery on a common kitchen table.

I remember when this fact became clear to me, and the instance may help to show what I mean. In a loan exhibition I came upon a picture of Chardin. It was a signboard painted to hang outside a druggist's shop. It represented a number of glass retorts, a still, and various glass bottles, the furniture of a chemist's laboratory of that time. You will admit that there was not much material for wish-fulfilment (unless the still suggested remote possibilities of alcohol). Well, it gave me a very intense and vivid sensation. Just the shapes of those bottles and their mutual relations gave me the feeling of something immensely grand and impressive and the phrase that came into my mind was, "This is just how I felt when I first saw Michelangelo's frescos in the Sistine Chapel." Those represented the whole history of creation with the tremendous images of Sybils and Prophets, but esthetically it meant something very similar to Chardin's glass bottles.

And here let me allude to a curious phenomenon which I have frequently noticed, namely that even though at the first shock of a great poetical design the subject appears to have a great deal to do with one's emotional reaction, that part of one's feeling evaporates very quickly; one soon exhausts the feelings connected by associated ideas with the figures, and what remains, what never grows less nor evaporates, are the feelings dependent on the purely formal relations. This indeed may be the explanation of that curious fact that I alluded to, the persistence throughout the ages of works in which formal perfection is attained, and the rapid disappearance and neglect which is the fate of works that make their chief appeal through the associated ideas of the images.

At this point I must try to meet an objection which psycho-analysts are certain to raise. They will say that in my description of popular art I have used the word "wish"

in the ordinary sense of a more or less conscious wish, whereas Freud uses wish of a desire which has been repressed from consciousness and remains active in the unconscious. The true Freudian wish is incapable of direct satisfaction. The typical kind of case is something like this. A middle-aged lady finds herself compelled at a certain hour of the day to go into a particular room and arrange all the objects in a particular way. She cannot explain the least why she does it and why she is compelled to perform this senseless act. By psycho-analysis it is discovered that in her extreme youth she was in love with her father and wanted to kill her mother, but that this desire was repressed from consciousness and came out later on in this peculiar and roundabout way. Perhaps both father and mother were dead at the period of her illness, and so any such fulfilment would be impossible, but even if alive she has ceased to love her father or be jealous of her mother.

I admit that if you adhere strictly to the use of the word "wish" in this sense, it is quite possible that Cézanne's still-life pictures are a sublimation of some such repressed instincts. But you will notice that Freud himself when he talks of the artist neglects entirely his own definition of "wish." The wish in this case is the unsatisfied trying for "fame, power, money, and the love of women." Now these are not repressed wishes, they are, or may be, clearly allowed in consciousness, and they are capable of direct fulfilment. And he goes on to say that it is only because circumstances do not allow of their direct fulfilment that the artist takes refuge in the phantasy world. Similarly I can guess pretty clearly that Dr. Pfister's young man's inventions are inspired by unsatisfied sexual desire and this too is not repressed in the true Freudian sense. In fact I suspect that many difficulties arise from the habit of psycho-analysts of passing from the strict sense of wish to the or-

dinary sense without even themselves noticing how misleading the results may be. My criticisms, therefore, are based on the use that they themselves make of the word in speaking of art.

Now let me assume that you have granted me my main theory, at least in its general outlines — that you admit that while there is an art which corresponds to the dream life, an art in which the phantasy-making power of the libido is at work to produce a wish-fulfilment, there is also an art which has withdrawn itself from the dream, which is concerned with reality, an art therefore which is pre-eminently *objective* and *disinterested*, and which therefore proceeds in the opposite direction from the other kind of art. If you will admit this, the most interesting problems suggest themselves for solution. What is the psychological meaning of this emotion about forms (which I will call the passion for pure beauty), and what is its relation to the desire for truth which is the only other disinterested passion we know of — what, if any, are their relations to the libido and the ego?

And here I will indicate a possibility which will have to be considered, a possibility which has often occurred to me, but with regard to which I have never come to any conclusion. I have admitted from the first the great probability, to me almost a certainty, that all psychic energy is divided ultimately from the instinctive life and has its source in the satisfaction, at however distant a remove, of some instinctive need or desire. I suppose, but I do not know, that you would trace the love of abstract truth to the reality principle, although, in its higher forms, it has long lost any biological value and has become an end in itself.

I should not be surprised if you were ultimately to trace the love of abstract beauty to the libido, but, even if you should, I should expect you to notice that its relation to

that instinctive need is very different from the simple relation of the phantasy-making, dream-like quality of impure, image-making art. For whereas dream-art, if I may use the phrase, is nearly akin to the day-dream and may almost be reckoned as part of the actual instinctive life, the love of beauty implies an almost complete detachment from personality and from the wishes made by our unsatisfied libido.

Even if it derives from the libido, it does not seek to satisfy it directly in any way. None the less the question occurs: What is the source of the affective quality of certain systems of formal design for those who are sensitive to pure form? Why are we moved deeply by certain sequences of notes which arouse no suggestion of any experience in actual life? Why are we moved deeply by certain dispositions of space in architecture which refer so far as we can tell to no other experience?

One thing I think we may clearly say, namely, that there is a pleasure in the recognition of order, of inevitability in relations, and that the more complex the relations of which we are able to recognize the inevitable interdependence and correspondence, the greater is the pleasure; this of course will come very near to the pleasure derived from the contemplation of intellectual constructions united by logical inevitability. What the source of that satisfaction is would clearly be a problem for psychology.

But in art there is, I think, an affective quality which lies outside that. It is not a mere recognition of order and interrelation; every part, as well as the whole, becomes suffused with an emotional tone. Now, from our definition of this pure beauty, the emotional tone is not due to any recognizable reminiscence or suggestion of the emotional experiences of life; but I sometimes wonder if it nevertheless does not get its force from arousing some very deep, very

vague, and immensely generalized reminiscences. It looks as though art had got access to the substratum of all the emotional colours of life, to something which underlies all the particular and specialized emotions of actual life. It seems to derive an emotional energy from the very conditions of our existence by its relation of an emotional significance in time and space. Or it may be that art really calls up, as it were, the residual traces left on the spirit by the different emotions of life, without however recalling the actual experiences, so that we get an echo of the emotion without the limitation and particular direction which it had in experience.

But these are the wild speculations of an amateur. It is just here that we are waiting and longing for you to step in with your precise technique and your methodical control.

I do not pretend that either artists or art critics have made much of a job of esthetics. We have started innumerable theories and abandoned them again without getting at any very positive and assured results. But we have of late, I think, been able to make a little clearing in the approaches to these problems by analyzing a little more clearly than the older writers what goes on inside us when we are confronted by different kinds of works of art and by knowing, or trying to know, or thinking we know, what, as artists, we are after.

I expect and desire that you will test everything which we say about ourselves and our aims as ruthlessly as you test your patients' statements about their own motives, but at least I hope I have shown that it is important to know what class of objects we have in view when we talk of works of art; to know that, if you analyze the pictures of let us say the Royal Academy, your remarks may interest us on other grounds, but not for the light they throw on the esthetic process in itself.

ON SENTIMENT

G. K. CHESTERTON

Mr. Chesterton is the most active and best known literary journalist now practicing his craft in London. He has made his mark as a writer of detective stories and of verse, but the greater part of his energy has flowed into the composition of essays on literary, moral, and social topics. It is a rare year that does not see the publication of one or two books from his pen. His vitality is inexhaustible and he applies it in a militant spirit to the defence of those old-fashioned notions and attitudes that are particularly exposed to the fire of modern criticism. He brings popular sympathies and a romantic temperament to the support of a conservative outlook. His revulsion against modernism in all its forms has sent him very logically into the communion of the Roman Catholic Church. But his conversion did not result in alienating English readers from him. One does not have to agree with his ideas in order to enjoy the zest of his personality, the unflagging animation of his wit, and the amazing agility of his play with words. The only way in which he ever wearies is by prolonging his cleverness beyond the reader's ability to absorb it. And aside from sheer cleverness, he is possessed of that robust good sense and that traditional British solidity of character, reminiscent of Dr. Johnson, that attaches him to his public by a stronger bond than similarity in formal religion. The essay *On Sentiment* is characteristic of Mr. Chesterton both in thought and manner. (From *Generally Speaking, A Book of Essays*, 1928.)

ON SENTIMENT *

IN reading some recent discussions about Victorian fiction I have come upon a curious fallacy about what is called sentiment. It is generally called sentimentalism or sentimentality. The term, in any case, is always applied in a bad sense. And it is almost always applied exactly where it does not apply. There are apparently some people so constituted that they are sickened by any sentiment concerned with certain simple and popular things; such as the love of mothers or the charm of children. They wince at the very word "mother"; and quiver with intellectual disgust at the very mention of any such sentiment as "women and children first." But this sort of fastidiousness or disdain is the very opposite of what it professes to be. So far from being an attack on sentiment it is itself an excess of sensibility. It is the supreme sentimental fault of being affected by the mere association of words, instead of by the intrinsic idea in things. There is nothing of illusion, or even of superficiality, in recognizing the importance of the emotions belonging to these things. There is nothing weak about showing such feelings; there is nothing realistic about denying such feelings. The feelings are facts; they are even very fundamental facts. We are not the less dealing with facts, because we are dealing with a very large number of facts. You may be so constituted in your nervous system, that what is common rapidly becomes commonplace. But that is because your emotions are easily exhausted. Your attitude is really and truly sentimental; because it is subjective.

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It is affected by repetition; but it is not in touch with reality about the things repeated. As an objective fact, the hundredth blade of grass is as green as the first blade of grass. The hundredth sunbeam is as bright as the first sunbeam. And the hundredth child murdered by King Herod is as pathetic as the first. King Herod may have come to the end of his pleasure; but the mother has not come to the end of her pain. And her pain is a plain fact of nature, absolutely radical and realistic; as solid as a lump of rock. It has every quality of stone; antiquity, universality, simplicity, permanence. And a stone is not any the less a stone because it is not the only pebble on the beach.

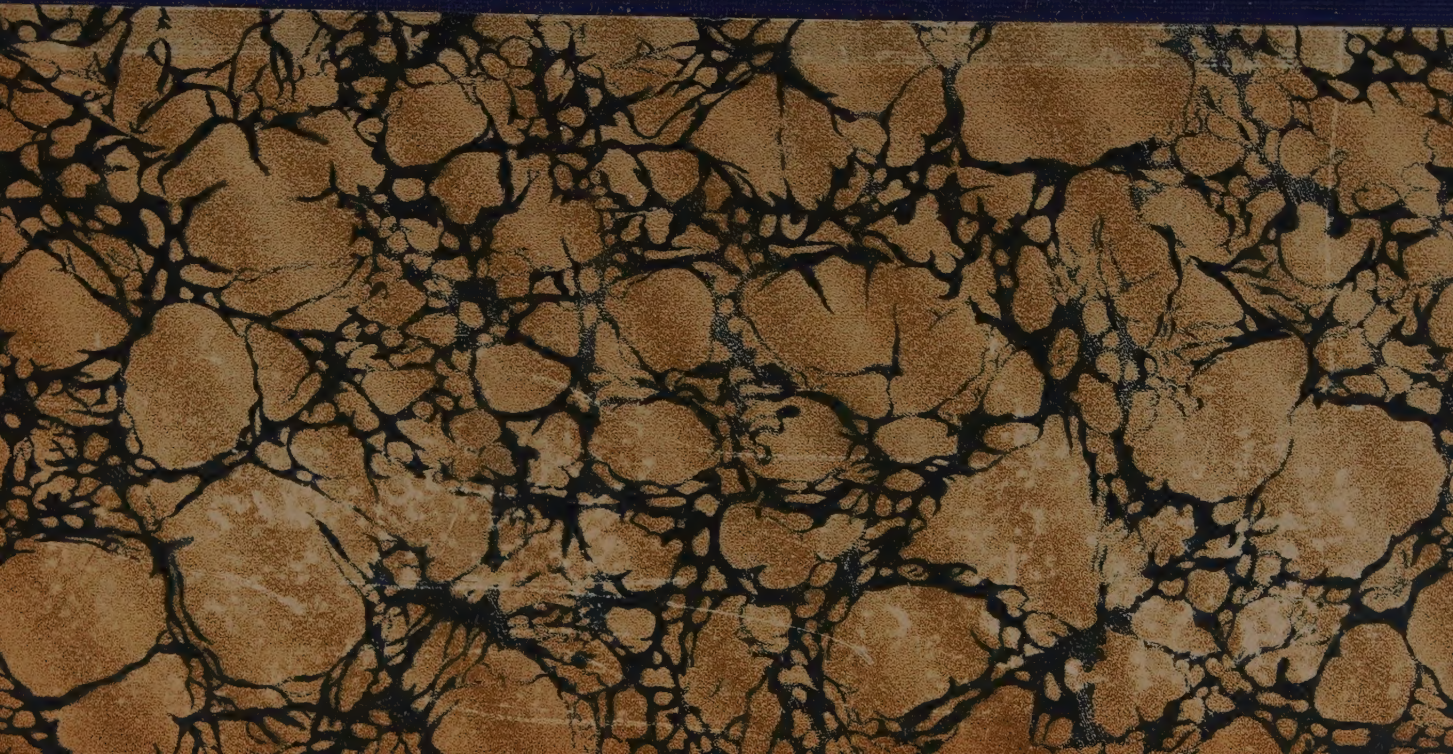
It is obvious that anti-sentimentalism is only a rather priggish and a rather snobbish form of sentimentalism. The fastidious person is really preferring feelings to facts. Nevertheless, we all know that there is something weak and deleterious that deserves to be called sentimentalism. Only, as is commonly the case to-day, hardly anybody makes any attempt at defining the thing he is always denouncing; finding it much easier to denounce than to define. I will not claim a final definition here; but I will suggest a principle as a practical test. The sin of sentimentalism only occurs when somebody indulges a feeling, sometimes even a real feeling, at the prejudice of something equally real, which also has its rights. The most common form of this dishonesty is what is called "having it both ways." I have always felt it in the conventionalised laxity of fashionable divorce; where people want to change their partners as rapidly as at a dance, and yet want again and again to thrill at the heroic finality of the sacramental vow, which is like the sound of a trumpet. They want to eat their wedding cake and have it.

It is as healthy to enjoy sentiment as to enjoy jam. In the evil of sentimentalism there must always be some sug-

gestion of *stealing* jam. It has many milder forms and lighter occasions than those above mentioned, which I am not going to debate again. All that concerns me here is the general definition; that the evil is not in the recognition of the feeling as a fact; or even in the enjoyment of the feeling as a fact; it is in the destruction or the dishonoring of some other fact. It is in the attempt to combine a fact and falsehood in one act of the mind. It is not silly to think that a young soldier looks splendid with a plume or a sword, riding away to the tune of "The Girl I Left Behind Me." Soldiers do go to battle and do leave girls behind; and the passions involved are not only romantic but real. But if we then make fancy pictures of war, and refuse to admit that wounds hurt, or that heroes can be killed, or that good causes can be defeated, then we are trying to hold two contrary conceptions in the mind at once. We want to admire the soldier and deny what is admirable in him.

In connection with Victorian literature, I will take a popular example; a play which everybody knows, which nearly everybody enjoys and admires; which I certainly heartily enjoy and admire; but which has not escaped the charge of sentimentality. And what strikes me as odd is that it is blamed where it does not fail, and not half so much blamed where it does. I mean Sir James Barrie's famous fantasia of "Peter Pan." I am not dealing with the aspect of it that I like most; the pirate with the hook or the crocodile with the clock inside it. It would surely be an excess of sensibility to see anything particularly sentimental about them. But many sensible people have complained very scornfully of the opening of the final scene; of the bereaved mother moving sadly about the room or playing soft music on the piano. I am not sure that I agree with this complaint; though of course it depends on how the thing is done. But real sentimentalism is a sin against reality; and this is not

really a sin against reality. Mothers do miss their children; a mother probably would think of them with affection if the house were suddenly empty; possibly with more affection than at those exciting moments when it seems a little too full. Some ladies do play on pianos, though the taste is doubtless liable to abuse; and music is a perfectly genuine way of relieving the emotions. There is nothing really false in all this; and indeed the critics do not really mean that it is false, but only that it is familiar. Yet there is something that does ring false in the play, and it seems to have been much less criticized. The final decision of Peter Pan was a bad example of having it both ways. What is really wrong with that delightful masterpiece is that the master asked a question and ought to have answered it. But he could not bring himself to answer it; or rather he tried to say yes and no in one word. A very fine problem of poetic philosophy might be presented as the problem of Peter Pan. He is represented as a sort of everlasting elf, a child who never changes age after age, but who in this story falls in love with a little girl who is a normal person. He is given his choice between becoming normal with her or remaining immortal without her; and either choice might have been made a fine and effective thing. He might have said that he was a god, that he loved all but could not live for any; that he belonged not to them but to multitudes of unborn babes. Or he might have chosen love, with the inevitable result of love, which is incarnation; and the inevitable result of incarnation, which is crucifixion; yes, if it were only crucifixion by becoming a clerk in a bank and growing old. But it was the fork of the road; and even in fairyland you cannot walk down two roads at once. The one real fault of sentimentalism in this fairy play is the compromise that is ultimately made; whereby he shall go free for ever but meet his human friend once a year. Like most practical com-

promises, it is the most unpractical of all possible courses of action. Even the baby in that nursery could have seen that Wendy would be ninety in no time, after what would appear to her immortal lover a mere idle half-hour. But I only mention it here as the first example that occurs to me of the sentimental fault where it really exists; and the way in which it is often alleged where it does not exist. It is not sentimental, in the bad sense, to make the mother play on a piano; because the notes on a piano only profess to be notes and not words that define and decide. But it is sentimentalism to use words in order to confuse and weaken, when they ought to define and decide. It is not sentimental to deal with things of sentiment such as tone or melody or minor graces of life. It is not false to be sentimental about these things that are avowedly things of sentiment. The evil comes in when we waver about weighty matters; not when we allow gossamer and thistledown to follow their own nature, which is to waver. And it may be noted that many great periods in the past, strong in arms and in counsel, gaining triumphs and building codes of law, reconstructing civilization or reawakening religion, were none the less very sentimental about lesser and lighter things. The great days of the Grand Siècle, of the Revolution, and of Napoleon were full of china shepherdesses and little opera tunes. But the great men of those days did not hesitate between the King and the Republic as we hesitate between a hundred new religions and stale philosophies. There is nothing feeble-minded about playing the flute, considered as playing the flute. But if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?

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